

The Inventor and the trade

Lotte Hellinga

IIANS-JOACHIM KOPFITZ (Editor)
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In a departure from the practice of recent years almost half of the *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 1983 is devoted to studies on Johannes Gutenberg. Most of this space is taken up by the proceedings of a conference held in Mainz on October 12-24, 1981, organized by the Institut für Buchwesen at Mainz University.

German bibliographical scholarship's strength lies in archival and historical studies. Through the work of Professor Severin Corsten these have in the last three decades yielded spectacular results for our understanding of the mercantile aspects of printing in Cologne, seen in connection with the university and with monastic institutions. Now the socio-economic structure, the whole complexity of civic and ecclesiastical life in several German cities, is drawn into the picture to provide an improved perspective on the work of the inventor: this diminishes the isolated drama of the betrayed *Meisterdrucker*, but we gain in obtaining a subtler picture of gradual develop-

ment, of a balance between opportunity, initiative and use of creative power within a framework of blessed normality.

At the conference, the broad approach was evident in the contributions of the city archivists of Strasbourg, Mainz and Frankfurt-am-Main: in Professor Köster's study of "Spiegel", the mass-produced pilgrim badges which led Gutenberg to experiment with casting techniques; and in Professor von Stromer's paper on the business sense of the financial banker of Gutenberg's earliest experiments in Strasbourg, seen in a context of late-medieval capitalism, and preceded by a plea not to isolate either material or archival evidence. Taken together these papers offer a formidable contrast to two recent American contributions to Gutenberg studies, those by Professor Todd and Dr Needham. Both are based on the observation of minute typographical detail and both lead to far-reaching theories about production methods, and, ultimately, the economic position of printing; can this extreme form inductive method - which for long seemed inevitable in the study of earliest printing - still be justified?

When German scholarship turns to material research, as it does in the next section of the conference papers, it also tends to widen its

basis by presenting superb visual documentation. The team developing electron radiography of paper as applied to early printing (Dr Schnitzer, Mrs Ziesche, Dr Mundry) illustrates its methods in exemplary fashion, and is particularly impressive in its demonstration of identity by printing superimposed transparencies. This may not sound sensational. Yet it leads to the reflection that even if historical bibliography can never be a science, as we have all agreed, the rules of presentation and interpretation of visual evidence should not be applied with less rigour than is currently demanded in the natural sciences. A further reflection is that when such refinement in method is developed, the sampling limits within which identifications are to be made need to be defined with more precision than has so far been the case. Expensive and sophisticated instruments, bound to remain in one location, may put limitations on researches (or, more bluntly, lead to random results) unless backed up by a lending system on an unprecedented scale.

Not less splendidly documented is the late Professor Roosen-Runge's paper on material research into the illumination of Gutenberg's Bibles. Workshops can be identified by analysing the pigments they used, as is shown in a brilliant sequence of illustrations in colour.

At the conference this empirical, detailed approach was balanced by Dr König's wide-reaching synthesis, in which, applying stylistic criteria, he distinguished illuminators of the Bibles, so that we may arrive at a new understanding of the dissemination of the first book ever printed: via the monastic network. With this unexpected perspective on the earliest printing trade the thematic circle of the conference was, as it were, closed.

In the remainder of the *Jahrbuch* a sizeable section on music printing is a welcome feature, especially since it contains articles such as Rosemary Hilmar's on the printing history of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*. The volume ends with a survey of literature on bibliographical work of the last few years, marred only by the fact that, inexplicably, the English-speaking world has sunk below the horizon.

Regular users will know how the miscellaneous contents of the *Jahrbuch* are best quarried once an index covering several years has appeared, as it last did in 1982. The present volume, thinner than usual, has, like its individual predecessors, no index at all. Would modern technology allow for an index that was updated annually over a number of years? This would surely increase the immediate usefulness of this valuable publication.

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	Two aspects of Gerhard Marcks's 'Prometheus Bound', reproduced from <i>German Expressionist Sculpture</i> by Stephanie Barron (224pp, Los Angeles County Museum of Art/University of Chicago Press, £33.95, 0 223 08820 3)

Cover picture

The ever-turning hand

John North

DAVID S. LANDES
Revolution in Time: Clocks and the making of the modern world
482pp. Harvard University Press. £17.
0 674 76800 0

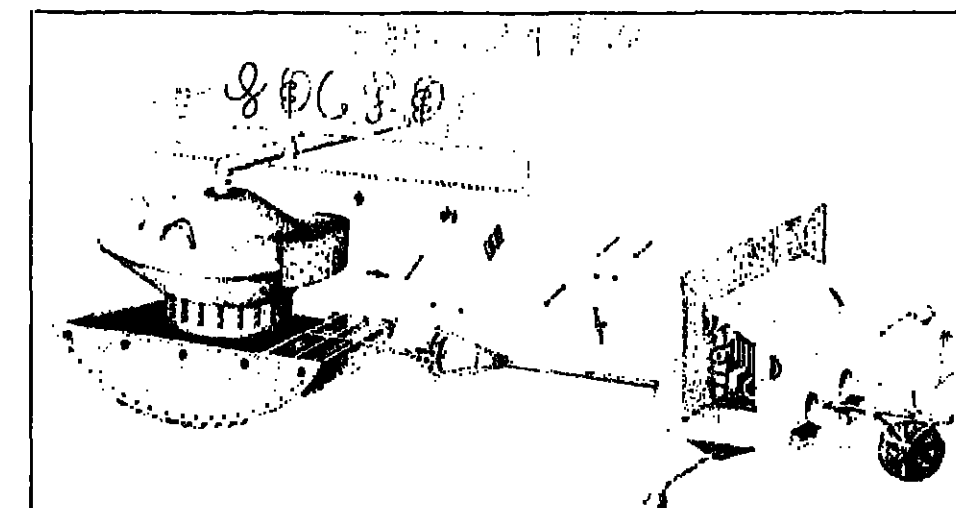
It is surely very odd that so little scholarly attention has been paid to the middle ground between, on the one hand, specialized studies of the technology of time measurement and, on the other, undisciplined excursions into Time and the meaning of Life. David S. Landes, writing as a historian, has ventured into this territory. It would be wrong to say that it was entirely uncharted before he did so. It is rather that there were smaller charts in plenty, but that he has pasted them together. He has done so in a very convincing way. He describes his work as a triptych - a study in cultural history, the history of technology, and social and economic history. The skill of the artist progresses as he goes from one panel to the next, from the question of how and why the invention of the mechanical clock occurred in Europe, and remained a European monopoly for five centuries, to questions of technological improvement, and finally to questions of economic history, with a lively and valuable series of chronicles of the birth, maturity, and decline of the industry in all its main centres. The pace of the book quickens steadily, from musings on the consciousness of time and the changing sense of time discipline and time-obedience, to the quartz-watch revolution at the end, by which time the life-span of an industrial empire seems to be measured in years rather than decades or centuries. This characteristic of the book, that makes one feel that it was timed by a runaway pendulum, is one of its many attractions - although it is perhaps an inadvertent reflection of the writer's own interests.

Not that Professor Landes overlooks much that could be described as relevant to the main lines of his history. He is dismissive of the relevance of tenth and eleventh-century Chinese hydro-mechanical clocks to the European mechanical clock of the thirteenth century, but gives a broadly acceptable general account of both. He even tackles the problem of why the Chinese did not in later centuries - almost to our own time - learn the artificers of Western horology, as they had opportunities enough of doing. He decides that "it was simply not important in China to know the time with any precision", a hypothesis that has some-

thing to recommend it, although I feel that books might be written on this one small point. (No social group today seems to me to take more delight in the synchronous squeaking of electronic watches on the hour than that of our own Mandarins.)

On the early European front, the question of origins looms very large, and especially that of the controlling device of the mechanical clock, the escapement. Was it invented as the result of "an interest in time measurement" (as Landes calls it) or as a response to a demand for a simulation of the rotation of the heavens (which a scholar of the thirteenth century

early, uncertain, years? Where, for instance, was the equal to Richard of Wallingford's solution to the problem of variable velocity drive, in medieval or Renaissance Europe? There was probably none; and yet his is the first clock of which we have any detailed knowledge. Landes rightly says that his and de Dondi's clock "made use of already established techniques", but he begs the question when he implies that because the use of a falling-weight drive made automated planetaria possible, "and not the reverse", the first use of this sort of drive was not in an astronomical clock. The question remains very much an open one.



One of the illustrations in Luigi Seraphini's *Codex Seraphinicus* (Abbeville, available from Pandemic, 71 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3HN, £45, 0 896 59 428 9). Written in an as yet undeciphered script, the *Codex*, we are told in the blurb, "presents an imaginary, parallel world that is at once bizarre and at the same time strangely familiar and recognizable".

might have regarded as much the same thing)? Although no firm answer is at present possible, I think he puts his money on the wrong horse, and that his reasons for taking issue with the late D. J. Price (among others) are misconceived. The point Price made was that astronomical representation was the stimulus that led to the invention, and that a degeneration ensued. By this, however, he meant a degeneration in the complexity of the sorts of device actually built, not in technical knowledge or expertise, as Landes interprets Price's somewhat paradoxical utterances. If the first mechanical timepieces were indeed astronomical, as seems to me probable, there is no particular paradox here. And as for technological expertise, there is at least a case to be made out for degeneration in certain geographical centres; so is there anything intrinsically paradoxical in extending the idea to Europe generally, in the

It would be unfair to dwell unduly on the chapters dealing with this critical early period, with their speculations about "something new" having arrived with words cognate with "clock"; with their conjectures about advances in hydraulic timekeeping in the century or two preceding the first mechanical clock (what of the rich Greek and Islamic traditions?); their claim that seasonal hours are somehow easier to tell by a clepsidra than by a mechanical clock (the monks of Mount Athos use the latter to this day to strike seasonal hours); that the art of the computus was for a few specialists; and so on. It is hard, too, to understand why Landes should repeat the old nonsense that the "elbion" was a clock-driven planetarium; but this "scientific" side to the subject receives relatively little attention, and the book really gets into its swing only when clocks become more personal artefacts - first as chamber

clocks, and then as watches. Life and work, as a consequence of this change, became - at least for an élite - more readily regulated, with a consequent "stimulus to the individualism that was an ever more salient aspect of Western civilization". The turning hand was "a measure of time used, time spent, time wasted, time lost", and as such it was "prod and key to personal achievement and productivity" - a point that Max Weber would have loved. There is some discussion of an old controversy as to where miniaturization began - in Germany or Italy - but more interesting is the outline of an argument that will in the future bear closer investigation, namely, that there is a positive correlation between Protestantism and the trade of watch and clock-maker in France in the period between 1500 and 1700. It might be dangerous to test the hypothesis in Germany, where numerous minor courts vied with one another to produce extraordinary testimony to craftsmanship on both sides of the religious divide.

The timepiece as a decoration or jewel reached a high point - one of many - in France in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The London ("puritan") watch was by comparison outwardly simple, perhaps for reasons of piety, perhaps to divide the allegiances of historians. The "main line of horological development", we are told, "was the perfection of clocks and watches as instruments of measurement". The puritans among us will have no difficulty in agreeing, or in feeling a little smug when reading of the importance of the clock in astronomy and navigation, of the application of the pendulum as a controlling device, and even more important in the long run, of the balance spring. As the second half of *Revolution in Time* unfolds, our guide shows that he is not only a first-class economic historian, but that he has a sound knowledge of the craft and mechanisms of the later period: detents, cylinders, rack levers, and grasshoppers - how much better one's grasp of the manoeuvrings of the Board of Longitude, and of personal and international rivalries at many different levels, given first a nodding acquaintance with these arcane items. Of course a good squabble may also be enjoyed at many levels, and the rivalries of Le Roy and Berthoud, Hooke, Arnold, Earnshaw, and Harrison (for whose work an understandable affection is shown) are all pointedly described, with the writings of Rupert Gould a clear influence here. A generation of quartz watch owners will surely still be able to enthuse about Harrison's chronometer H4, which in 1764, after five

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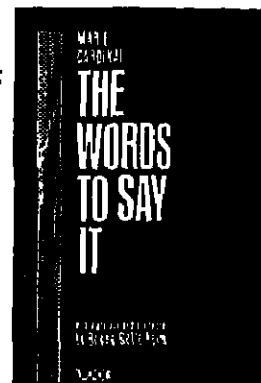
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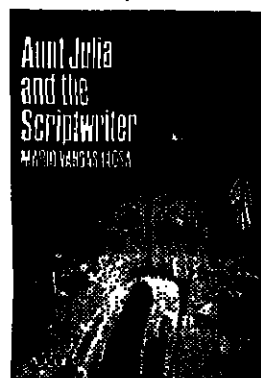
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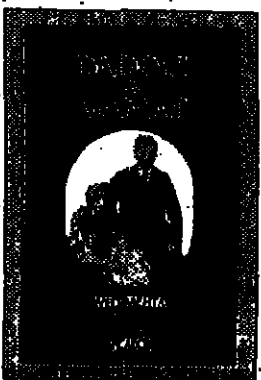
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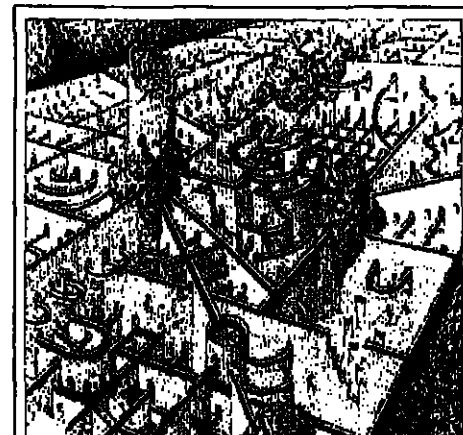
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months, most of it at sea, had lost on average about a tenth of a second a day.

This was not only cause for puritan-style satisfaction, but mattered much to the maritime struggle of the eighteenth century, with its colonial and commercial implications. Another commercial aspect was the production of marine chronometers themselves, a trade that became important in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, with John Arnold the industrial pioneer. Arnold and Earnshaw made so well, it seems, that the demand for replacements was very low, and the English trade suffered. The sale of marine chronometers was small beer, however, by comparison with potential domestic sales. In the early eighteenth century Britain could sell heavily to France; by the 1760s the tables were turned, or at least turning, with the advent of Geneva manufactures sold by case and ornament - and smuggled abroad at times, to avoid protective tariffs, in malodorous loads of fish. Crucible steel, for the springs, was long a British monopoly, and yet the French, Germans and Swiss had learned the secret by the turn of the century. The Dutch and the Swiss imitated London timepieces, and the British were much exercised by this low-cost competition. Geneva, man for man, was perhaps the most productive city in Europe - but it was no longer the straitlaced city of Calvin. Where a French maker might be "horloger du Roi", the vast export trade with Turkey allowed Rousseau père to be described as "horloger du sérail". The rise and fall and rise and fall of the Swiss industry makes chattering reading: it is hard not to think of parallels with the modern car industry at every turn, although I am not aware of any car-maker who has been driven to barter his products for silks in which his starving employees are obliged to dress.

The Swiss knew what the customers wanted - whether it was ever thinner watches, automation watches with Moses striking water from the rock, or, for a different sort of buyer, rhythmic erotica. By the first decade of the nineteenth century the British trade was limping; by 1870 the Swiss were producing more than two-thirds of the world's output, by value, and the more the British watch trade lost

ground, "the more the British consoled themselves with the thought they were right and their customers wrong". Even the consolation that they made the world's best watches was no longer theirs after 1907, from which date the Swiss took first prize in the pocket-watch category year after year. Landes has his own very plausible analysis of the phenomenon, again along rather Weberian lines: protestantism, the work ethic, literacy, numeracy, and one of the best of European bookshops to be found at Le Locle in the Jura - these are some of the ingredients of his explanation.



Reproduced from the Codex Seraphinianus; publication details are given on the previous page.

The irony of it all was that the Americans were eventually to do much the same for the Swiss as the Swiss had done to the British, and to be greeted at first with the same scorn. The great breakthrough in mass production came around 1850. By 1900, the worker at the Waltham factory produced six times as many watches per year as the Swiss worker, and Ingersoll had already been selling more than a million watches a year. To the consternation of

their competitors, their machine-made watches were as reliable as most of the competition hand made work. At length, the Swiss reacted vigorously and sensibly, and followed America's lead, so as to snatch back their predominant position. A series of economic measures beginning in 1928, of collective agreement governing output, pricing, and export policy for all producers did no harm; and the government itself maintained economic discipline when times grew worse in the 1930s. For time, after the war, their share of world production passed 80 per cent; but for the past thirty years they have been under attack from industries in Japan, Germany, France and the Soviet Union. And now the quartz revolution is upon us; and industries have come and gone within a handful of years; and at many places you can pay £5,000 for a good Swiss analog quartz; and in this morning's newspaper I see a multi-function Japanese quartz watch to £1.99. How many more turns of the wheel are possible?

Our attitudes towards time have a history of their own, only partially engaged with that of the clock. The radio time-signal, for instance, has probably more to answer for than the low clock, but of course much less than the one. There is still a history to be written of how time matters in different ways in different societies, of why it is polite to be late in dinner in one, punctual in another, and early in a third. On the agreement between two philosophers was harder, said Seneca, than getting agreement between two waterclocks. Much had happened between then and August 22, 1861, when it was announced in *The Times* that the Royal time was timed to reach Leamington at 1.17 pm. (What railway official would care to make the same sort of confident statement today?) Although he gives to his book the subtitle "Clocks and the Making of the Modern World", Professor Landes does not often address himself to this sort of revolution. He clear, comprehensive and entertaining "tuttych", however, will certainly ease the way for any historian with this end in view, and this one of several reasons why I see it as a book with great potential influence. For the time being, there is nothing quite like it.

To the aid of the party

J. A. Turner

STEPHEN KOSS

The Rise and Fall of The Political Press in Britain: Volume Two, The twentieth century 718pp. Hamish Hamilton. £25.
0 241 11181 1

This massive chronicle of the editorial and proprietorial stonemasonry of the past is published only a few days after a High Court jury decided that it is fair comment to say of a Fleet Street editor that he thinks erudite is a sort of glue. We have indeed come a long way, from "Taffy" Gwynne to "Sid Yobbo", from Northcliffe and Beaverbrook to Matthews and Murdoch. Even the most robustly Whiggish optimist must pause to reflect on such a rake's progress of political culture. In this volume are the materials for a long and melancholy reflection.

Stephen Koss's twentieth century sees the fall of the political press as he defines it. The weight of the book is therefore skewed to the early years. Half of the text takes the story from the end of the Boer War to the end of the Great War, and the remainder is written in the cadences of a long postscript, further attenuated after the 1947 Royal Commission on the Press. This balance suits Koss's style, his sources, and an expertise developed in his earlier studies of Edwardian politics and journalism. The most satisfying aspect of the book is its celebration of Edwardian political attitudes; and the author's conception of politics is constantly Edwardian. A political press is a party press, and to the extent that newspapers lose their party allegiances, they become less political. This is a straightforward, simple and coherent analysis: the only surprise is that anyone should still believe in it. For most of this epic story, it must take the credit for breaking a path through an appalling thicket of evidence. At the end, the analysis paralyses explanation. The Edwardian press reflected the anatomy of contemporary politics. Koss believes that the modern press does so only as a fractured and distorting mirror, but he does not allow as an explanation the possibility that politics itself has changed.

So many things about this book afford positive pleasure that reservations can be suspended for most of the reading of it. Koss begins with a charming deflection of the complaint that "Americans have to write such long books". In fact he is one of the very few American historians who write English like a native, because he is deeply immersed in the culture about which he writes. The book is not padded with redundant explanation, and the prose is economical and attractive, so that one can read almost unwearyingly to the end. The scholarly apparatus is exact, though there is no bibliography.

The sense of kin

Christopher Hitchens

RUSSELL BAKER
Growing Up
278pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £9.95.
0 283 99056 2

Here are Russell Baker's Aunt and Uncle Allen, as he first encountered them during the years of the Depression:

He was a country boy from Virginia with a southern drawl and a dry laconic wit, a Protestant whose family had been in Virginia since 1666 and produced several generations of colonial gentry. She was a New Yorker, half Irish and half Cuban, who had grown up in a Catholic orphanage and known little of country life that she proposed cutting the milk bill by buying a cow, keeping it in the backyard, and feeding it on scraps from the table.

This passage shows Baker's strengths, both as a memoirist and as a much-loved columnist for the *New York Times*. In describing his own childhood, and in depicting hard times in the American past, he manages, most of the time, to be emotional without being sentimental. He also contrives, most of the time, to be funny about his ancestors without being patronizing. These qualities and distinctions are too rare, in these days of "mellow" and "affectionate" writing, to count as typically American. Baker writes in a deceptively unassuming and plain manner, which emphasises rather than understates the keen edge of his memory. His book

liography, and the tone is detached, knowing and confident. The tale he has to tell is of the relationships between the metropolitan daily and Sunday newspapers and the political parties. The provincial press, except for the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Yorkshire Post*, "receives short shrift in these chapters... because it received short shrift in reality"; to be more precise, Koss is writing about London or "national" politics and has no cause to examine the impact of the provincial press in the provinces. Questions of management and commercial practice, and indeed many issues in "newspaper history" as commonly understood, are excluded. Hence the subject-matter is well defined and the chronological structure of the account permits an uninterrupted contemplation of Koss's main themes. Occasionally the author rambles in his journeys along the corridor from Fleet Street to Westminster. Otherwise the craftsmanship of a distinguished historian is shown at its best, on a difficult and important subject.

At the dawn of the new century the newspapers which mattered were either Liberal or Conservative. Robert Blatchford described his weekly *Clarion*, the one nationally visible Labour paper, as "unpopular with the Labour and socialist leaders... unknown, almost, to the Trade Unions... anathema to the Liberals & Tories, Teetotalers, the Roman Catholics, the Methodists... and... no use to the folk" (Blatchford's italics). This left it with a readership of less than 70,000, and the *Clarion* consequently did not matter. Sympathy and share certificates bound the newspapers to their parties. An elaborate but transparent laundering technique, common to both sides, kept political control of much of the press in the hands of the party managers. Wealthy sympathizers gave money, which was used to buy shares held by other sympathizers (the nominees of the party machine), who ensured that the paper behaved itself. It was well understood that political papers were most likely than not to lose money: shareholders expected to keep on paying until they had earned their perages, and sometimes afterwards. Many papers were independent of party funds, but their partisanship was guaranteed by the sympathies of proprietors such as Rowntrees and Cadburys on one side and the redoubtable Lady Bathurst on the other. The editors had a political stature which was often greater than that of the nominal proprietors. They were often privy to the secrets, or at least the secret ambitions, of leading politicians; and their political advice was keenly sought.

This cosy symbiosis was rudely disrupted by two elemental forces: Joseph Chamberlain, who did not believe in party loyalty, and Lord Northcliffe, who did not believe in losing money. These two canons of the political press

were never secure again. The Tariff Reform question scattered the forces of the Unionist press, and from 1903 the Tory papers were quite likely to be found abusing their party's leadership. The Liberal press had an easier time in praising its party; but it was no more possible to run a Liberal than a Conservative paper to compete commercially with Northcliffe's *Daily Mail*, and the supply of Liberal lionsaires, though large, was finite. The House of Lords crisis and the 1910 elections showed up the cracks in the marriage of press and politics, but major breakdown was not precipitated until the First World War. Here Koss is in his element, tracing the irony and ambiguity of a press which maintained its partisan allegiances, while governments dissolved and reformed in coalitions and parties re-examined their ideological and social roots. The great editors were succeeded in the corridors of power by the great proprietors: Northcliffe and his brother Rothermere, and Beaverbrook. Lloyd George cultivated the good opinion of the press, included the proprietors in his government, and finally succeeded in buying a newspaper for himself. Without the certainties of partisanship to rely on, politicians of all sorts tried to follow his lead by flattery, bribing, or in the last resort buying, one of the "organs of opinion".

Between the wars politicians discovered that Emperor Rothermere and Emperor Beaverbrook had no clothes (Emperor Northcliffe had already died insane). Stanley Baldwin was just able to weather Beaverbrook's Empire Free Trade campaign, and marked his relief with a vicious (and, as Koss shows, double-edged) charge that the press enjoyed "power without responsibility". Thereafter the power of the press to sway parties, ministers or voters seemed to decline with remarkable speed. By 1947, when the Royal Commission on the Press was set up, there was widespread agreement

that there was something wrong with the control and management of the press, but nobody was quite sure what it was. The press did not contribute a clear partisan structure to the 1950 election, and thereafter the commercial as well as the political history of the British press has been, in Koss's words, one of "crisis, closure and complacency".

Koss has described the fall of the political press without entirely explaining it. He is imprisoned, partly by his sources, partly by his perceptions, in the world of high politics. Within this convention his work is superlative, though the pressure of space makes it difficult for him to push the boundaries of knowledge back very far. On critical episodes such as the fall of Asquith's Cabinet in 1916, or the role of the press before and after Munich, he adds detail and style, but not much more, to the established accounts. As a historian of the First World War he has already burned his fingers with conspiracy theories, and these are firmly eschewed. But his interpretation of the press is largely a matter of personal interactions at the top. At least two alternative views suggest themselves. One is that the diminution of the role of the press has followed the extension of the franchise in 1918 and 1928, which is scarcely mentioned in Koss's account. Historians have argued that this reduced the impact of rational discourse on the voter: they may be wrong, but the point should be explored. A similar question, no more fully explored by Koss, is the impact of radio and television. Yet another view, which Koss dismisses as "hopelessly old-fashioned", is that the press is the political instrument of capitalist society, whose political instrument of capitalist society, whose political effect is to limit the discussion of alternatives. A study of this "political press", in which the *Sun* matters more than *The Times*, would take the author into areas which the present account does not touch.

Germaine Greer
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The superimposition of images

Henry Gifford

DAVID M. BETHEA
Khodasevich: His life and art
381pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£23.90.
0691065594

"When he writes, a dry, bitter sandstorm whirls him along. Microbes can't live in his blood: they curl up and die." Shklovsky's savage caricature of Khodasevich in 1920 finds a degree of support from Nadezhda Mandelstam in *Hope Abandoned*: "His poetry brings no illumination... there is a bitter infirmity of spirit about it." After his death in 1939, there following years of almost general neglect. A few voices still spoke for him. Nabokov in particular held Khodasevich to be the outstanding Russian poet of this century; Nina Berberova republished some of his verse and prose; Vladimir Weidlé wrote sensitively about him. But for many he seemed the classic case of an émigré unable to replenish his inspiration, the victim of an unlucky temperament, of poverty in exile, and ultimately of despair.

Now we are given a thorough and generous study, which faces all the complex issues in Khodasevich's life. David M. Bethea quotes abundantly from the verse with neat line for line renderings, and from the memoirs and criticism, much of the latter only to be found in the emigrant press. He is a good judge of the poetry and fertile with comparisons. Some of these, however, are not examined closely enough – that with Auden, for instance. The only other reservation one feels about this much needed book is that here and there it smacks of too conscious professionalism. This has permitted such an unworkable image as that of "anagogic keys" which "keep the antinomies in some homeostatic balance", and lets in rather pretentious words like "hienal", "hirudine", and "the sense of decremence".

Few writers have been disadvantaged so effectively throughout their careers as Vladislav Felitslanovich Khodasevich. He complained of arriving too late both in his family, the sickly and last born child of incongruous parents, and also in historical terms, having missed the flood tide of Russian Symbolism. His father was a displaced Polish nobleman who eventually sold Kodaks in Moscow; his mother, a Jewish convert to Roman Catholicism and the Polish national cause. The first poetry he heard was the opening lines of *Pan Tadeusz*, always broken off at the same point where his mother was overcome by emotion: "I never saw Mickiewicz or Poland", he relates, "for they were as impossible to see as God." But they belonged where he did, in the incense and slanting sunshine of the Catholic Church that mother and son attended, the altar of which was "the threshold or even the beginning of that other world" so persistently haunting his imagination.

It was a peasant woman from Tula, his foster mother, who gave him "the agonizing right", as a poem to her memory declares, "to love and curse Russia". A Russian poet by transplant, he repaid his debt to her – and she sacrificed her own child for his sake – by an unswerving devotion to the language and above all to Pushkin.

The age of Derzhavin and its brilliant sequel, that of Pushkin, ought to have been his. Khodasevich loved even the light album verse in Pushkin's time, both for its "sacred simplicity" and its no less "sacred banality". But the Moscow milieu in which he grew up feared banality and was far from simple. Khodasevich and his close friend Must played with a dreadful earnestness the Symbolist game of finding occult significances everywhere. From this "forest of symbols" in the end he would escape to the daylight sanity of Pushkin. But for the crucial years of early manhood he was deeply involved with the strong-willed Bryusov (best man at his first wedding, the marriage soon ended in separation) and the mercurial Andrey Bely. The havoc they wrought upon other people, Bryusov as a callous immoralist, Bely on a fever of paranoia – taught Khodasevich the human cost of the Symbolist way of life. But there was another lesson to be learnt from Bryusov, as Gennady also recognized: "A strict craftsman, now and again he wrote very well-turned poems – a point conceded by Mandelstam.

Muni committed suicide in 1916, crushed by a reality – the European War – which he had sensed approaching but could not face. He may justly be seen as one more casualty of the Symbolist movement. The only friend, also Jewish, whom Khodasevich loved equally with Muni was the scholar Gershenzon, from 1914 his mentor and moral stay. They shared a dedication to the study of Pushkin. Gershenzon stands as the guardian spirit over Khodasevich's first mature volume of poetry, *Grain's Way* (1920). A happy second marriage, and the discovery in Pushkin of what Professor Bethea terms "a new modest idiom, the mood of 'playful seriousness'", charged this book with a prevailing optimism. Gershenzon had led him to the translation of modern Hebrew verse. It was Tschernichowski, with his confidence in the simple goodness of life, who gave Khodasevich the key image of *Grain's Way*. That persistent note of joy in being alive, familiar from Pasternak and Mandelstam, the delight in bread-making, the oven's glow, the "resounding clay vessel" – these things do not accord with Khodasevich's reputation. But in the first trying years after the Revolution, he could believe that the "grain's way", through darkness and death to resurrection, would be his own and Russia's. He has moments of sure epiphany: when Moscow is dazedly coming back to life after a week of revolutionary overthrow in 1917, a four-year-old watches two released pigeons soar up, and becomes ecstatically aware of the life in his own body:

In the middle of Moscow,
suffering, lacerated and fallen,
like a tiny idol, he sat there unperturbed,
with a senseless, sacred smile.

Khodasevich had acquiesced in the Revolution, but soon concluded that "literary activity under the Bolsheviks was impossible". He served as secretary to the courts of arbitration, even being called upon to draft a new labour code, which he wisely abandoned; he lectured in the Moscow workshop of Proletkult; he worked in the Theatrical Department of Narkompros, and for Gorky's "World Literature" publishing house. On advice from Gorky he moved in 1920 to Petrograd where the prospects of keeping alive were better. The city, majestic in desolation, was no longer the capital, merely the relic of an imperial past. Khodasevich had the good fortune to find a place in the House of Arts, where an intense life of the imagination was at its height. He wrote more verse than ever before in the fifteen months before leaving Russia in 1922 and in the fifteen that followed. His marriage ties were loosening (though he would remain on good terms with his second wife); and a new love for Nina Berberova, who went abroad with him and retained his devotion until the end, animates some of his poems written in 1922 with tenderness and joy. But already the darkness was closing in.

His new volume of verse, *The Heavy Lyre*, appeared in 1922; its successor, the poems of exile forming the third part of his *Collected Poems* in 1927, he called *European Night*. There are signs of weariness and dissatisfaction in *The Heavy Lyre*, though he is not yet overwhelmed by them:

I grow old and bent – but store up
All that so tenderly I hate
And so sarcastically love.

He can now claim to be "wise, severe and frugal". There are still moments of exaltation, as in the famous "Ballad" that ends the book. Here he rises above the dead flats of existence to become an Orpheus, and his Petrograd room whirled in a "smoothly revolving dance". But the contrast between *The Heavy Lyre* and *Grain's Way* is most clearly seen in two poems on the death of Muni. He had felt pang of guilt for not going to Muni's help in extremity, as Muni had once come to his. In the poem from *Grain's Way*, "Look for Me", the lost Muni declares his presence in the "transparent spring light"; Khodasevich's hands, alive and trembling, can touch him. Only three years later two grim quatrains in *The Heavy Lyre* about Lady Macbeth, washing her bloodstained hands and without sleep for three hundred years, will conclude: "I've not slept for six years myself" – since the suicide of his friend. Elsewhere he looks out of the window (a favourite image) with contempt for the world; only to turn that contempt upon himself: "So writes in a

flowered the worm/Cut in two by a hard spade."

Weidlé remarks that Khodasevich's best poetry was written when Symbolism, "cleansed of its florid pretentiousness and accepted without faith as a faith, became his theme". Khodasevich, he claims, had lived more deeply than anyone through the experience of Symbolism to discover what was true in it. The vision of a transcendent reality, that sphere inhabited by his soul whence it looks down with indifference upon his sufferings here, is one Khodasevich finds increasingly hard to sustain. The terse, exact utterance of these poems in *The Heavy Lyre*, and more so in *European Night*, is often devastatingly ironic; Bethea explores the nature of Khodasevich's irony at some length, borrowing a term of Wayne Booth's to describe it – "unstable irony", which makes the speaker both observer and victim. And yet this categorizing does not altogether fit. Khodasevich still desperately holds to his "faith without faith". Comparisons with Beckett are themselves unstable. They seem right for a particular moment: life, especially in "stony" Berlin and when he tramps over "the parquet of Parisian puddles", may really seem senseless. But in his short narrative poem *Sorrento Photographs* (1925–26) he captures, as Bethea points out, the light touch and skilful modulations of Pushkin, as like a careless photographer he superimposes one image upon another. Once again, it is the dual vision that serves him best, and in its last use, when "the greenish wave of Castellammare" becomes the Neva reflecting upside down the angel on the cathedral spire in the Peter and Paul fortress, that "huge guardian of imperial Russia", there is an apocalyptic grandeur.

For the last twelve years of his life Khodasevich was finished as a poet. He bore this with anguish; he suffered from almost continual illness, and could find little to uphold him in emigration. This was the time of his major achievement in prose, as chronicler of the age he had known, as biographer of Derzhavin (but frustrated in his attempts to write the life of Pushkin), and as a fine and conscientious

critic. Khodasevich may be likened in one respect to Belinsky; he took literature very seriously, and cheating or string-pulling, as Weidlé relates, moved him to indignation. His prose is admirably clear, pointed and flexible. As memoirist of the writers he had known, mainly poets in *Nekropol'* (Necropolis, 1939), he speaks with authority and humane insight. After surveying the wreckage of Esenin's life, he pays tribute to an unshakeable integrity in the poet; of Gorky (a personal friend under whose roof at Sorrento he and Berberova lived for some time) he remarks that his credibility was finally ruined because it was impossible for him not to compromise rather than forgo the reputation of a great proletarian writer; and in the fraught relationship with Bely he is generous in admitting his own lack of perception. Towards Bryusov he is hostile, but not unjust. Only Mayakovsky, about whom he wrote elsewhere than in *Nekropol'*, remains an adversary whom he could not respect or forgive even in death.

Khodasevich's overriding concern during these final years was to keep alive a Russian literature in exile. As early as 1921 he had declared that Pushkin was no longer so accessible to the young as to the older generation. "A national literature", he contended a dozen years later, "is formed by its language and spirit, not by the territory in which its life passes, or the daily round it reflects." The half-century since he wrote those lines has not convincingly borne him out. However, in the gathering darkness which he believed would cover all Europe, all Western civilization, he still campaigned for Russian émigré literature to recognize its tragic mission, to become fully conscious of the experience it must record. Khodasevich's life ended in apparent negation. What he said of Blok seems no less true for himself: "he died of death". And yet there is inspiration in that courageous struggle for the truth as he saw it, in his determination to serve "a faith without faith" and to stay true to the spirit of Pushkin. His was a story of mischance and dislocation; but he could not desert what Pasternak once called "the territory of conscience".

Distant echoes

Arnold McMillin

YURY D. LEVIN (Editor)
Dzheyma Makferson, 'Poemy Ossiana'
(James Macpherson, 'The Poems of Ossian')
589pp. Leningrad: Nauka. 5.70 roubles.

The first Russian versions of Ossian's poems go back to 1781, reaching their apogee in the work of Yermil Kostrov some dozen years later, although occasional Russian translations continued to appear until the end of the 1820s. Ossianic themes also figured in original Russian verse of the first three decades of the nineteenth century, particularly in the pre-romantic period, while the spirit of Ossian is felt fleetingly in the teenage work of such poets of the next generation as Pushkin and Lermontov. With increasing doubts about authenticity, however, interest in Ossian waned rapidly and the references to him in poems by Nikolay Gumilyov and Osip Mandelstam in the years before the Revolution reflect keen historical awareness rather than the continuation of any live tradition.

The story of Ossian in Russia has already been told by Yuri D. Levin in an exemplary monograph (see TLS, July 3, 1981). Now in the prestigious "Literary Monuments" series the poems are given in Dr Levin's new, annotated Russian prose translation, followed by a section entitled "Ossian in Russian Poetry", comprising three sub-sections which present in turn examples of earlier translations, imitations of Ossian, and poems about him. Perhaps predictably, the last two sub-sections contain the better poetry, but the first does afford the opportunity to compare a translation from the heyday of Ossian's Russian popularity in the 1790s, Karpist's version of *Carthage*, with the prose version now offered: Levin's is not only consistently more natural but also more poetic.

The remainder of the volume comprises a series of appendices. The first essay, "James Macpherson's *The Poems of Ossian*", is a

cise exposition, humane and witty, that would be popular with students here were it available in English. The use of contemporary sources is extremely thorough and, no doubt, tantalizing for Soviet readers, including, for example, a glimpse of the world of Boswell's Johnson, still, sadly, untranslated into Russian. As well as describing Macpherson's life and times, the social and literary background to the creation of Ossian, and the ensuing controversy, Levin pays attention to the poems' reception in France and Germany, both countries playing an important role in the penetration of Ossian into Russia. The latter process is expounded with similar skill in the following chapter, a shorter version of the author's 1980 monograph. Extremely useful also are the comprehensive index of names and titles in *The Poems of Ossian*, a genealogical table of mythical characters, and notes on the poems represented in the volume's anthological section.

By 1820 Pushkin was not only anticipating but also in part reflecting a general shift in Russian literary taste when he treated the Ossianic manner ironically in his first major narrative poem, *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. Many earlier admirers had grown disillusioned and, indeed, hostile, the poet Katenin, for instance, describing the reading of Ossian from cover to cover as a suitable "punishment for literary transgressions". But if the enthusiasm aroused by Ossian proved short-lived it nevertheless played a considerable role in the development of many European literatures, not least Russian. Dr Levin's admirable edition of *The Poems of Ossian* throws much light on this fascinating phenomenon. Clearly a labour of love, it presents Ossian to Soviet readers with an enthusiasm and mastery of material and critical apparatus that deserve not only praise but emulation.

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Veils and violations

Mary Midgley

SISSELLA BOK
Secrets: On the ethics of concealment and revelation
332pp. Oxford University Press. £12.95.
0192177338

Moral philosophers are out in the dirty world again. Released from the tower-block of extreme abstraction, they are willing to make fools of themselves along with everybody else by playing their part in attacking the practical problems of the age. Their release has been partly due to sheer frustrating boredom on the heights, making even the most docile prisoners question the principles which immured them, but also to a strong, spontaneous, unlicensed outbreak down below of enquiries into matters like medical ethics. People facing painful dilemmas saw that part of their problem was conceptual, and began actively seeking philosophical help.

Rawlsian discussions of justice went some way towards bridging the gap between theory and practice. But they are limited, and also somewhat abstract, inclined, in the eighteenth-century manner, to manufacture Procrustes' bed first and then select the facts to fit it – which is just the kind of thing that gets philosophy a bad name. What we now most need is an approach which ought to be much more congenial to the British Empiricist tradition – a close examination of the questions as they arise. Every large practical problem has its conceptual aspect, which is just what a philosophical training ought to make us able to detect. Because the conceptual system is a continuous whole, this will lead us to the vast questions in the end. But we cannot do effective business with those unless we have approached them by the right path – unless we have picked out the relevant conceptual issues in the first place and have watched out all through the journey for flaws in the system of ideas. The outcome does

not depend just on a few abstract concepts like *good* or *freedom*, any more than it depends only on the facts. It involves a whole labyrinth of intermediate ideas by which we group and interpret the facts. And this is where we normally get lost.

This labyrinth is Sissella Bok's territory. She helped to pioneer its recent re-exploration (after decades of neglect) in her very impressive first book, *Lying*, which arose out of an unpretentious enquiry in medical ethics. Investigating the morality of placebo experiments, she ran into something which nobody had bothered about before – namely, the fierce sense of outrage over being lied to which often possessed the patients, while the professionals who had been doing the lying regarded it with amused complacency. Finding, when she extended her inquiry to other situations, that this contrast was common, she diagnosed a clash, not just of interests, but of far-ranging philosophical ideas, which she proceeded to document and map in a fair and useful manner.

The beauty of the method is that readers can see plainly what it is that they are already committed to, instead of feeling that they have been whisked off to an alien philosophical word-game. Reality is not just being sporadically raided for examples to use in a philosophers' debate. It is being surveyed for large areas of trouble – areas which change continually as the world changes, and leave us, if we are not careful, perpetually fighting the last conceptual war.

The new book uses the same method with greater command on material which turns out, I think, still more interesting. At a glance, secrecy looks a less promising topic than deceit, since it does not at once unveil a single plain moral issue. Contemporary problems about secrecy are of two opposite kinds. On the one hand, matters essential to people's lives are increasingly being kept from them; on the other, their privacy is increasingly being invaded. If a survey is to do more than despairingly notice these contrary evils, it must

uncover principles which can guide us in distinguishing between decent and indecent kinds of secrecy. The first step, as Bok rightly insists, is to grasp that this distinction is needed. Arguers from both sides have to stop relying, as she shows they constantly do, on wide abstract claims. (On the one hand, she cites legal writers claiming a general "right to be let alone" to cover trade secrets as well as personal ones; on the other, defences of intrusive journalism in the name of the public's "right to know".)

The presumption, she argues, differs in different kinds of cases. Very generally, in personal matters it is on the side of secrecy: in public ones, accountability favours openness. All kinds of detailed considerations, however, can affect these presumptions. Moreover, the boundaries between personal and public are not always clear, and some cases bring both realms into conflict. Much of the book is occupied with fairly detailed studies of such things as the psychology of secret societies, the functions of confession and gossip, the workings of confidentiality in the professions, the headaches raised by increasing secrecy in trade and science, and by the espionage which produces it, the moral aspects of whistle-blowing and leaking and intrusive social-science research, the limits of military secrecy and the meaning of Wintergate.

It would be easy to get lost among these fascinating and often alarming issues. The author, however, keeps a firm eye on her central problem, which concerns personal identity. How much information do human beings really need about what is going on around them? And, contrariwise, how much protection must they have for information which is essentially their own? She looks at many views, including the current extraordinary fashion for recommending complete openness, based on some unusually silly remarks from the ageing Sartre, who claimed that "transparency must substitute itself at all times for secrecy" and will do so when economic problems have been solved.

Sartre went on to say that he could "imagine rather easily the day when two men will have no more secrets from one another because they will keep secrets from no one, since the subjective life, just as much as the objective life, will be totally offered, given". This is no worse, but also not much better, than saying that "hell is other people".

Why does anyone today attend to such ravings? The reason, I think, is clear from Bok's book. Our civilization is driving itself full-speed into a contradiction. On the one hand, we are losing privacy because we are becoming more and more interdependent; the mere size of our societies, combined with the vast technology to which we have grown addicted, continually presses us closer and closer together. On the other, in reaction against this pressure we assert individual freedom and autonomy more and more emphatically; it is the main theme of our current moralists, and is supposed to be the chief spiritual treasure of the West. But of course it is continually compromised by all kinds of corporate activities, even desirable ones, and severely threatened by others that are much less desirable but extremely hard to see the end of, notably by what is laughingly called its "defence". The notion of "transparency" as a way out of this grave conflict of motives and values has its attractions, because it is seen as a way of killing off individualism at a stroke.

All such drastic, one-sided remedies are, however, mere fantasies. The dialectic with which Sissella Bok presents us is real. Her book is an admirable guide to it and a most cheering indication that the day of Procrustes may be passing. As the Sarah Tisdall case has just shown, secrecy is a prime example of a problem where dogmatic, noisy moralizing from both sides rages unchecked. As an American, Sissella Bok is shocked by our Official Secrets Act but she does not just rant about it; she goes into both sides of the argument. Very many other problems call for this kind of honest discriminating attention.

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Having long been regarded as the pinnacle of my faith, Goodman's... I have now found a way to reveal the one material object... I dream of these great things... Anthony Bond

OXFORD

Against vain speaking

Christopher Hill

RICHARD BAUMAN
Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of speaking and silence among seventeenth-century Quakers
168pp. Cambridge University Press. £19.50 (paperback, £6.50).
0521255066

This is a sociolinguist's approach to the early Quakers, by a Professor of Anthropology. But Richard Bauman knows more history than he pretends. He acknowledges the seminal work of Hugh Ormsby-Lennon – alas, still unpublished – which identified a linguistic crisis and revolution in mid-seventeenth-century England. Professor Bauman hopes that his study of Quakers' social use of language will help us out of the "Babelish confusion" (Ormsby-Lennon's phrase) prevalent among seventeenth-century historians.

Vain speaking, Quakers thought, was sinful; believers should wait until God spoke through them. So those with an ability to speak should use their gift to "bear the testimony of the Lord as we have received it from him". Hence Quaker interruptions of services in the "steeple houses" of the state church, and their denunciations of "hiring" ministers, "false prophets and greedy dumb dogs". "The Lamb's War" was in one major outward sense a struggle between the charismatic prophets of Quakerism and the upholders of the priestly tradition of established religion. Quakers proclaimed their message in market-places, in the highways, wherever an audience was available. They poured out pamphlets in an "incantatory" style, repetitious, emotional, a stream of consciousness. Quite different were the silent meetings of convinced Friends, in which – in theory at least – no one spoke until God moved him or her. Bauman illustrates the tensions which this produced among aspirant speakers; they might sin either by failing to utter what God had revealed to them, or by speaking superfluously.

Kinds of precisionism

Peter Lake

MARY FULBROOK
Piety and Politics: Religion and the rise of absolutism in England, Württemberg and Prussia
215pp. Cambridge University Press. £20 (paperback, £7.95).
0521256127

Mary Fulbrook is concerned to locate and gauge as precisely as possible the primacy to be attributed to religious factors in the resistance to absolutism in early modern Europe. She attempts to do this by comparing the positive contribution of Puritanism to the English Revolution with the very different fortunes of pietism in Prussia and Württemberg. Puritanism and pietism, she argues, were both "precisionist" movements for reform within formally Protestant national Churches. Each strove for reform of the structure and personnel of their host Churches and/or for the spread of a deepened spirituality among the laity. In each of the three states Dr Fulbrook perceives the rise of absolutism (rather loosely defined as the right of the monarch to raise revenue without the prior consent of some sort of representative institution). She then charts the different reactions to it of pietists and Puritans.

Her purpose is to argue that their entirely divergent political responses are not explicable in terms of class interests or ideologies, or of a comparison between Lutheranism and Calvinism, but rather, attributable to the different structural situations in which Puritans and pietists found themselves. When a "precisionist" movement was able to achieve its religious aims within the status quo, its potential as a focus for political opposition, even where in theory it remained opposed to absolutism, was greatly reduced. That was the situation in Württemberg. In Prussia, for a time, the needs of the state and those of the pietists coincided, and pietism helped to transform a traditional "ruling class" (Fulbrook's phrase) into a

"Plain language" and what Bauman calls "the rhetoric of impoliteness" derive from avoidance of vain speaking. To address a single person as "you" was grammatically incorrect. More important, a gentleman who "thou'd" his social inferiors expected the deferential "you" in return. To "thou" and "thee" him, and to refuse to doff your hat to him, proclaimed the equality of all in the sight of God. Quakers were unimpressed by the argument that such usages were merely conventional and customary politeness: customs and conventions were themselves degenerate and sinful. Refusal to take judicial oaths was a rejection of the authority of the magistrate. Swearing conflicted with the Word of God, whose truth was confirmed in Quakers' hearts. "Going naked for a sign" was the acting out of a metaphor. Bauman points out that the message intended to be conveyed was often lost on the audience, who were more shocked than edified. The exercise was perhaps more important for the performer than for the public. It was one of the earliest Quaker practices to be dropped.

Bauman's concluding chapter deals with "the routinization of charisma". "Avoid all imagined, unseasonable and untimely prophesies", the London Yearly Meeting insisted in 1672, "which tend not only to stir up persecution but also . . . to the amusing and affrighting simple people from receiving the Truth." After 1660 there was a general "moderation of tone and action". Breaking up services and "going naked for a sign" were abandoned. In 1662 Quakers were urged to "take heed of aggravating reflections and forward clashing at persons". An internal censorship of publications was established. Within meeting-houses ministers were seated separately, in what had been "an assembly of equals". Sin loomed larger in Quaker theology. These changes led to controversies, splits and disownments; but by the eighteenth century the Quakers had become the pious, quietist Society of Friends which has done so much to civilize the modern world. A little more history would have made Bauman's interesting analysis even better. He knows that the Quakers were not unique, but

in fact all the practices which we regard as specifically Quaker were inherited from earlier religious radicals. "Thou" and "thee", refusal of hat honour and of oaths, have a continuous history from fifteenth-century Lollards. Generations of prophets believed that God spoke through them. The assertion that "the doctrine of the indwelling spirit of God in everyone was distinctive to the Quakers" is simply mistaken. Gerrard Winstanley and many Ranters advocated silence. Other religious groups which flourished during the English Revolution permitted women preachers. What needs to be explained is the survival of the Society of Friends.

"The routinization of charisma" might better be called "the end of millenarianism". Early Quakers had expected the coming of God's kingdom in the immediate future. Individuals had been pacifists, but many of the leaders, including Fox, were not. In 1659–60 Quakers had discussed with the republican government possible political collaboration to

prevent a restoration of monarchy. But after 1660 Quakers had to adapt to defeat. In January 1661 they proclaimed the peace principle for the first time, and withdrew from political activity. They "purchased their religious freedom", in Bauman's words, "at the sacrifice of engagement in worldly politics". Organization and "moderation of tone and action" explain their survival when so many other religious groups disappeared. It took time for the new approach to be accepted; some Quakers participated in Monmouth's rebellion in 1685. And it involved rewriting Quaker history. Bauman too often relies on later editions of Quaker writings, which sometimes differ from the originals.

So Professor Bauman's analysis needs to be replaced in history. It might with advantage be translated from the jargon which sometimes obscures it. But his original approach and sensitive exposition will stimulate anybody interested in the period, or in the origins of Quakerism.

The faith of the unlearned

Jonathan Sumption

ROSALIND AND CHRISTOPHER BROOKE
Popular Religion in the Middle Ages: Western Europe, 1000–1300
176pp. Thames and Hudson. £12.50.
0500250871

An English bishop, returning from a tour of his diocese in 1340, was moved to complain that the "populace" had given themselves over to idolatry. They were celebrating bogus miracles, venerating non-existent saints, indulging in magic and superstition, "deluded by insane and untrue visions, inspired by the Devil and his agents". What did he mean by the "populace"? It is a good question, which Rosalind and Christopher Brooke leave unanswered in this enjoyable but rather unsatisfactory book.

By popular religion the Brookes, like Bishop Grandisson of Exeter, mean the religion of those who venerated relics, visited shrines, joined enthusiastic sects and viewed with exaggerated and literal belief the stories which were painted or sculpted for them on church walls. But these activities were certainly not confined to the lower orders. Kings, earls and knights visited the shrine of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury, as the miracles testify. Counts are known to have carved their names with chisels on sanctuary walls while apparently kneeling bowed in prayer. Louis XI of France, an intensely superstitious man, was one of the most uncritical relic venerationers of his age. Popular religion was the religion of the unlearned, including the literate unlearned. It was the religion of almost all the laity and a majority of the clergy. The religion, in fact, of everyone except men like Bishop Grandisson, a minority of refined, highly educated and sensitive individuals. The important point is that this minority governed the Church.

In the eleventh century, the beginning of the period covered by the Brookes, the long process by which Western Europe was nominally converted to Christianity had, only recently been completed. The organization which covered much of it with a hierarchy of parish priests, bishops, archbishops and ecclesiastical officials was still in the making. Among laymen there was a spiritual revival marked by some spectacular exhibitions of enthusiasm. The "building crusades" at Laon, Chartres and elsewhere, and the early crusading expeditions to Spain and the Middle East were symptoms of this mood.

In no other period was "popular" religion so close to the "official" religion of the Church. Thereafter, as the Church became more organized and reflective, it began to distance itself from popular religion and to seek to control and limit it. Much of what we know about the faith of the unlearned is derived from the records of this long and fruitless effort.

The last important spiritual movement which the Church absorbed into the mainstream of its life was the Franciscan movement. This happened, not without misgivings among senior churchmen, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Had St Francis lived a little

later he would probably have been treated as a heretic. Indeed, only four years after his death, Pope Gregory IX, in the bull *Quo Elongati* discarded the saint's *Testament* which had prescribed rigorous poverty for his followers, and sanctioned the process by which the Franciscans were transformed into a centralized and propertied organization. It is surprising to find so little said about this seminal event in a work one of whose authors is a distinguished authority on Franciscan history.

The spontaneous spiritual movement of the late Middle Ages, the flagellations, the mass pilgrimages, the proletarian crusades, the Beguines of the major continental cities, the private visions of eccentrics like the fifteenth-century recluse Margery Kempe, anything which smacked of untutored enthusiasm, was rejected with embarrassment and distaste even if there was nothing about them which was doctrinally offensive.

This attitude is perfectly encapsulated in the statement of the canons of York Minster when they drummed Margery Kempe out of town in 1417. "We are well aware that she knows the articles of faith", they said; "but we will not suffer her to dwell among us, for the people have great faith in her and peradventure she might pervert some of them." Popularity had become something suspicious in itself. These views were extremely common at the higher levels of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Indeed, there was a significant body of orthodox as well as unorthodox opinion which rejected even the most ancient manifestation of lay piety, the cult of relics.

The Reformation, which owed almost everything to this tradition, was essentially a rejection of popular religion by an educated minority. Even in a relatively disciplined society like sixteenth and seventeenth-century England, the majority, as Keith Thomas has shown, continued in their old ways. On the other side of the ecclesiastical divide the Roman Catholic Church has always had its periodic short-lived bouts of self-righteous and intolerant puritanism: in the early fifteenth century; in the immediate aftermath of Luther; in the late eighteenth century; in the 1960s and after. In the end all organized religion must be popular religion if its institutions are to survive.

What one would wish to learn from a book about popular religion in the Middle Ages is how it differed from unpopular religion and why. There are some chapter headings in this book which suggest that we shall learn it here. But we never do. What we have instead is a number of essays, only loosely connected, on medieval piety. They are stylish, entertaining and full of picturesque detail. My complaint is that they are not illuminating: which they should be, the authors being who they are.

Clarissa W. Atkinson's *Mystic and Pilgrim: The Book and the World of Margery Kempe* (241pp. £17. Cornell University Press. 0801415217) studies the much-travelled life, social and ecclesiastical circumstances and spiritual life of the devout and outspoken wife and mother of Lynn, whose dictated autobiography is the first in the English language.

The myth of necessity

Sidney Hook

ALEXANDER ZINOVIEV
The Reality of Communism
Translated by Charles Janson
259pp. Gollancz. £12.95.
0575 033045

One of the striking things about the cultural life of the Soviet Union has been its failure to develop in an intellectually impressive form the basic principles of Marxism and the philosophy of dialectical materialism which it allegedly presupposes. This has not been for lack of official proponents of these doctrines or of attention devoted to them in educational institutions. Indeed, their study is required in the curriculum of all schools above the elementary level. The absence of freedom of inquiry, the crudity or apparent absurdity of some of the tenets of dialectical materialism, the revolutionary advances in scientific disciplines cannot be a sufficient explanation of the failure for some comprehensive intellectual synthesis to develop. After all, medieval philosophy was as closely bound by theological dogmas as Soviet philosophy by political ones; official watchdogs of orthodoxy were just as intent on sniffing out tendencies towards atheism and materialism in the one case, as the heresies of fideism and idealism in the other. Philosophy was as much a handmaiden to religion in Western Europe as it has been to politics in Soviet Russia, but nothing remotely resembling the writings of thinkers from Augustine to Ockham in subtlety, logical acumen and insight has appeared in the Soviet Union or anywhere else in the world where the Kremlin's writ runs.

Nor can the different character of what philosophers were required to believe in both milieus explain the rich variety of speculative thought in Catholic Europe as compared with the poverty of philosophy in the Communist world. From the standpoint of common sense and ordinary experience, the revelations of Scripture taxed the bounds of human credulity and norms of intelligibility far beyond anything that can be found in Marx, Engels, Plekhanov and Lenin. To be sure, the medieval schoolmen had behind them the great traditions and achievements of Greek philosophy, once Plato and Aristotle had been purified and baptized. But Marxism, too, had deep philosophical roots. Had not Engels himself declared that the socialist working-class movement had inherited the legacy of classical German idealism – of Kant, Fichte and Hegel? And once Marx recognized that Darwin, by naturalizing the human mind, had removed the last vestiges of supernaturalism from the materialistic view of the world, the way was open for a systematic development of an evolutionary naturalism whose concepts of emergence could attempt to do justice to the revolutionary discoveries of modern science. Yet no intellectually respectable attempt until now has been made to develop the philosophy of dialectical materialism.

Perhaps the simplest and most adequate explanation of the poverty of Soviet philosophy as contrasted with the many splendoured creations of medieval thought is that the comparison is, in various senses of the word, untimely. Less than a century has elapsed since 1917, while medieval philosophy spans a period from the fifth century (if we include Augustine) to the fourteenth century (if we include Ockham). Perhaps it is only a matter of time before the philosophy of dialectical materialism finds its Soviet Aquinas. To be sure, it is currently safer for a potential Aquinas, or even for thinkers more modestly endowed, to pursue their research beyond the borders of the Soviet Union. But this may change; although it is unlikely in the near future.

However that may be, there was some reason to believe that if any Soviet philosopher was going to prove capable of developing a satisfactory intellectual synthesis of dialectical materialism it would be Professor Alexander Zinoviev. Compared to figures like Ruda, Mitin and other worthies in the history of Soviet philosophy, he is a towering eminence. Unlike most of his confrères he is at home in the field of mathematical logic, to which he has made some contributions. He is also *au courant* with developments in modern physics. Before

his expulsion from the Communist establishment and the Soviet Union, he taught logic and philosophy for fourteen years at the University of Moscow after a distinguished career in the armed services. Always somewhat suspect to the authorities because of a youthful political indiscretion, and to his colleagues because of his refusal to reinterpret – in effect, to repudiate – formal logic along the traditional Hegelian lines, he was none the less highly regarded for his intellectual capacities by some key figures in the highest circles of the Soviet Union. His decision to publish abroad his scathingly critical book about the Soviet Union, *The Yawning Heights*, a savage and yet profound satire of contemporary Communism, was a deliberate step towards self-exile. Before he did so, he had been offered an opportunity by one of the highest Soviet officials to head an institute of dialectical materialism which he scornfully rejected. (So he reported during the course of an address he delivered at Stanford University a year or two ago.)

After writing a succession of novels exposing the absurdities of Soviet life and the still greater absurdities of Western views about the Soviet Union and its institutions, Zinoviev has written a straightforward account of the nature, organization, functioning and future of Communist society ostensibly eschewing any moral evaluations. Under the title of *The Reality of Communism* he has published an analysis of more than a hundred short chapters on "the laws of the Communist type of life [which] are the same for all times and all peoples". These laws are considered under many different categories. The references to institutional practices and behaviour in the Soviet Union are used to point up in a dramatic and poignant way the operation of these laws.

Regardless of their degree of familiarity with Communist theory and the facts of Soviet life, readers will be startled by Zinoviev's contentions. The relation of Marxism to Communism, he holds, is an extrinsic one. The historical approach to Communism is irrelevant where it does not obscure the facts. Communism arises not from capitalism but from communality, from the living together of masses of people under certain conditions, the most important of which are scarcity of available resources, social ownership of the means of production, centralization of power, elimination of classes of private owners, and the necessity of keeping the social order from dissolving into chaos and anarchy. The tendencies towards Communism therefore are inherent in all large and complex non-Communist societies because of the nature of communality – the essence of which, according to Zinoviev, can be fairly expressed in the maxim "Dog eat dog".

With great skill Zinoviev sketches the deceptions and repressions of Soviet Communism; not as a system imposed from without on an unwilling people but as something which is a natural and inevitable development from certain initial conditions. His unflattering but realistic picture of Soviet man, of the Soviet social cell, and of the larger complexes of human relationships with their ambiguities and deceptions presents them as small-scale replicas of the Soviet state in the large. Although the ideology of Communism professes ideals which, to adapt Zinoviev's blunt expression, should inspire dog to help dog, the necessities of living, surviving, and rising in the scale of safety, power and affluence result in the most extreme forms of mutual hostility. Despite the conventional forms of language and address which fool only foreigners, the "other" in Communist societies is not a brother but a potential or actual enemy. Conversely what is true of the individual is true of the state. "The Soviet Union as a whole behaves like the average Soviet citizen; it is unreliable, mendacious, hypocritical, it is boorish from a position of strength, cringes in the face of superior strength and is in addition absolutely sincere."

No one can truly understand these realities of Communist life, according to Zinoviev, who has not experienced and reflected upon them at first hand. He is impatient not only with the ignorant friends of Communism in the West, whose views and misperceptions he describes with some hilarity, but even of the learned, critical, Kremlinologists. They underestimate the degree to which custom and use have cre-

ated a second nature among inhabitants of Communist society, who no longer experience the degradations, deceptions and injustices to which they are subjected as abnormal or unnatural. The normal individual does not regard himself as a person independent of others with a yearning for privacy but as part of a collective or commune of some sort. If he tries to live unattached to a collective he runs the risk of being considered a "pariah" and consigned to a distant collective not to his liking. Every collective is a hierarchy and everyone seeks to improve his position in it. And since as a rule the higher the position, the sooner and greater are the perquisites in the way of rewards, bonuses, better housing, etc. the view that social inequality is justified "is accepted by the overwhelming majority of the people". The operating principle of distribution under socialism which is, in theory, "reward according to one's work", turns out to be reward according to one's social position. And, as Zinoviev shows, the Communist principle "reward according to one's needs" turns out to be "reward according to one's social position, too", since beyond the sheer necessities of food, clothing and shelter to stay alive, "need" is a relative concept whose level is socially determined. In any case the result is an endemic social inequality sometimes equal to and sometimes surpassing the inequalities of non-Communist societies.

There is no need to carry Zinoviev's detailed analysis to every feature and aspect of Communist life. He has something illuminating and paradoxical to say about all of them. Despite his contention to the contrary, there is little he discloses in the large about Soviet life that is not already known in the West. But sociologists will find rewarding his descriptions of the details of institutional functioning, and how the routines of daily life are controlled by various collectives and not by the individual's choice. It explains why mature citizens from a Communist state transplanted to Western societies are discomfited by the burden of

choices and responsibilities they had never confronted before, despite all the improvements in their material comforts.

Zinoviev is confident that the majority of citizens in a Communist society do not perceive the compulsions under which they live as a lack of freedom. Dissenters and heretics are comparatively few and completely peripheral. Compulsory labour, celebrated as a duty, is manipulated by Communist régimes to dispatch large masses of the population to far off regions where the necessity of physical survival overcomes the resentments of the transfer. The fact that no one can live for long in a collectivized complex society without violating some law enables the authorities to fill the concentration camps when there is need for unpaid labour to reduce the costs of production in physically hostile regions. There is a tendency in large Communist societies "which everyone either tries not to notice or carefully conceals, towards a special form of slavery; not in a figurative but in a literal sense of the word". This fits in with the inevitable social hierarchies generated by the system. It cushions the natural resentment of those more fortunately situated that arises wherever many persons must labour for low pay in jobs of low prestige. "In order that the dismal life of Communist society should really seem to be the promised paradise, there must be a hell with which people can compare their lives and thank their stars that they are at least not in that hell."

This cheerless picture of the present and future of the domestic régime of Communism is not mitigated by Zinoviev's account of its foreign policy aspects. Here if anything, the prospects are even more chilling. The Soviet Union is in a state of perpetual mobilization. The West is doomed to defeat, whether there is war or peace, in virtue of its many weaknesses, not the least of which is its failure to understand the nature of Communism. The view that Communism with a human face can develop in the future, or that it can some day function by recognizing and enforcing the civil and human

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Down among the rushes

Tom Phillips

DEREK JARMAN
Dancing Ledge
251pp. Quartet. £7.95.
0704334615

For the steady, straight and thoughtful Jarman country will seem a long way away. It is certainly no country for old men: the gay are eternally in one another's gleaming arms, with suitable breaks for filming. With his flair and talent, plus a cinematic physiognomy reminiscent of Dreyer's St Joan, Jarman has all the attributes called for in his temporary king. While one emerges from *Dancing Ledge* with a clear picture of Derek Jarman's sex life complete with fairly brutal-sounding brief encounters in gay bars, and idylls of bronzed bodies on the beach, the outlines of a robust creative career are hard to disentangle, since almost every project seems to begin or end or entirely take place in scenes like a camp parody of *La Vie de Bohème*. For the sake of full artistic opacity the chronology is scrambled, which makes reading a maddening experience, akin to watching a set of muddled rushes in a viewing room double-booked by the British Film Institute and *Gay News*. Yet apart from one or two paranoid whimpers (about the Tate Gallery and other institutions) Jarman is lively company: there is the courage and ingenuity of a dedicated cineaste revealed in his accounts of making without compromise the pictures he wants to make, with little official encouragement. He is often penitential and the budgets of his films seem heroically tiny.

The blurb describes the book as, among other things, "polemical", but here the grave and the gay also get mixed up, sometimes with almost comic results. "It's worth noticing how many 'gay' artists die young: Murnau, Pasolini, Eisenstein, Fassbinder, Marlowe, Orton and Caravaggio . . .". Jarman seems to be making a film loosely based on the loose life of the last-named on that silly list, whom he artlessly describes as "the most powerful religious painter of the renaissance". I fear that a dismal tradition in the cinema, of major artists being traduced by minor ones, will be extended (Jarman has been a close associate of Ken Russell) and the complex figure of Caravaggio will be seen in a kind of moral monochrome. Hints of this already appear in Jarman's text as Caravaggio "paints his lovers as Saint John, the wild one in the wilderness who will be destroyed by a capricious woman".

For those not in the know it is hard to recognize more than a handful of the characters who cruise through these pages identified solely by their Christian names (there are some easy ones, Pier Paolo, David, etc. . .) and it is a relief when the author lingers over affectionately written portraits of his parents and family, or when he sensitively evokes places (the title is the author's favourite spot on the Dorset Coast) and buildings. He is not particularly generous to fellow creators outside his coterie: Peter Greenaway comes in for a special blast, ironically enough directed at the painstaking and persuasive drawings that played so elegantly with fiction, time and authorship in *The Draughtsman's Contract*.

Despite the occasional informative sidelight on the modern cinema and the very occasional amusing anecdote (I think I might have stuck out *Sebastiane* had I seen it at its Hull premiere, when its maker was the only member of the audience) the book features, to its cost as a work of general interest, decidedly more pricks than flicks.

Happenings recalled

Sean French

JIM HAYNES
Thanks for Coming! An Autobiography
290pp. Faber. Paperback, £3.95.
0571 13176X

According to my calculation, Jim Haynes's autobiography is dedicated to about 3,000 people, a nineteen-page list that reads like a directory of Who Was Who in London in the late 1960s: Beckett, Greer, Kenny, Vidal, Keeler et al. unceasingly rubbing shoulders, with only celebrity in common. The gesture seems typical of Haynes in its expansive, limitless sincerity but also in its commercial shrewdness: this must be the only book ever published which would cover its costs if the dedicatees bought one copy each (even when you deduct the many dead, infirm and impecunious from the total).

Haynes was always an entrepreneur. In 1959, when stationed near Edinburgh, he left the American Air Force and, with the £500 they gave him, started up Britain's first paperback bookshop. Then he helped set up the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh. In 1965 he founded the London Traverse Theatre with Charles Marowitz and Ralph Koltai. But Haynes wasn't particularly interested in books, art, theatre or even making money. He wanted a "space" where people could get together and . . . well, get together. So in late 1967 he bought a warehouse in Drury Lane and founded the "Arts Lab". It became a place to eat, talk and watch performances of a kind so alternative it makes today's Institute of Contemporary Arts look like the court of Louis XIV, and it survived for two years without Arts Council subsidy because Haynes had stumbled on a new market. Suddenly young people had money to spend and, more importantly, older and richer people had become envious hangers-on to the young. Several reviews of "happenings" at the Arts Lab are included in *Thanks for Coming!* and they say the same thing: this is all very boring and inept but it's wonderful. Where Haynes really parted company with Richard Neville (founder of *Oz* magazine) was over Neville's insistence that most happenings weren't actually any good

and it was only worth concentrating on the good ones. Eventually the Arts Lab was destroyed by its own fame – it became a Mecca for every drop-out in Europe who arrived in Covent Garden with backpack and no money to spend. The middle-classes departed in horror and the venture collapsed. Haynes then headed for the Continent in order to devote himself entirely to sex. He founded the pornographic paper *Suck*, organized the two "Wet Dream" erotic film festivals in Amsterdam (1970-1), and now teaches Sex and Media at a university in Paris.

And then there's this book. You read the list of names at the beginning, you read the meagre text which filters its way through what looks like most of Jim Haynes's scrapbook and you wonder why it is so boring. Charles Marowitz gets it right in a letter, guilelessly included by Haynes, which points out that the uncritical and indiscriminating is irreconcilable with art. It would be interesting to know what the Wet Dream Festivals were like but Haynes writes about them as if he hadn't been there. He does include a page from *Suck* that reprinted extracts from his Festival diary, above which is a snap of the diarist's penis in what must have been its only moment of dormancy during the festival. On one day for example: "Back and forth from the Film Museum to the Leidseplein, then work in the Festival Office. Another fabulous orgy at nightfall and ecstasies with beautiful Sheila. A truly incredible evening!" The only reason he can't conclude with "And so to bed" is that most of the time he's already there.

The book is padded out with newspaper clippings and letters to and from friends, some of the most desperately embarrassing kind – "Take care, smile often, fuck tenderly, be happy!", he signs off a letter to literary agent Michael Sissons.

Why are Faber publishing such rubbish? If they must be so protective about T. S. Eliot's archives, could they not have extended the restrictions to the Jim Haynes archives? The library of Haynes's own Sex and Media department (if it has a library) could have been presented with the material under a total embargo until the year 2060. That may not be long enough, but at least most of us would be safely underground.

rights which now exist on paper, is as nonsensical as one which postulates a Capitalism without money, capital and profit. Zinoviev is convinced that "Communism cannot exist without expansion". All its professions of peaceful coexistence with social systems whose ideals and practices of freedom, limited as they are, are a constant threat to its stability, is so much froth on the wave of the future.

What can be said in assessment of Zinoviev's views? Here we must distinguish between his historical analyses, many of which are ingenious, of the tissues and cell structure of Soviet life, and his overall perspective on the nature and future of Communist society. The perspective suffers from an assumption of lawlike determination which is fundamentally a priori although Zinoviev insists that his conclusions are based only on empirical data. He claims that the social laws that govern Communist society are as rigorous and inescapable as the laws that govern nature, invariant for all Communist societies despite the presence of national and territorial factors which vary the details but do not modify the basic pattern of their operation. However, even if there were such laws they would not necessitate the existence of the society for which they hold, or throw light on how it came about. The laws of aerodynamics explain the operation of the aeroplane but they didn't bring the aeroplane into existence. That depended on laws and events not related to the laws of aerodynamics.

Zinoviev also suggests that all the social laws of behaviour in a Communist society are ultimately derivable from the natural egoism of human nature as Hobbes and Stirner conceive it. This is established more by fiat than by evidence, and by interpreting apparently altruistic, non-self-regarding actions as basically selfish. Such a view makes it difficult to understand how the human family ever developed – not to mention the more dramatic episodes of human sacrifice and heroism. Nor does it explain why Communism emerged in Russia and China and not in Egypt, or why capitalism developed in north-western Europe and not elsewhere.

Zinoviev is much too cavalier about the relation between socialism and totalitarianism – a term he does not like since according to him it designates political coercive control from above rather than coercive social control from below. Granted, in the absence of political democracy there is a potential for coercive controls on every level in a completely socialist economy. But where political democracy is present there is no correlation between the degree of enforcement of socialism and the presence of coercive social controls. The latter depend as much on cultural, religious and traditional factors as on economic factors. Today there is far greater freedom in almost every sphere of cultural life in the United States, as in Britain and France, despite the growth of the public sector of the economy, than existed in the halcyon days of free enterprise in 1890 or 1913.

As one reads Zinoviev's account of the remorseless development of Communist society

from the communality of human life, one feels that he has lost sight of the fact that men make their own history. He seems unaware of the presence of genuine alternatives of lesser or greater scope in the story of the past, and of the role of moral judgment, of intelligence and stupidity in determining the choice among them. He regards history as a succession of events in a natural process beyond human control. No matter how untoward, every historical occurrence has for him the force of a natural event to which we adjust if we are not foolish, as we adjust to major storms, floods or drought. In a natural disaster there is no sense in cursing one's fate. Given the Communist system, the logic of its development requires, on Zinoviev's view, that someone like Stalin emerge at some time to perform the functions that are integral to the system.

Does Zinoviev truly believe this? If so, it is difficult to understand, in someone so consequent, the existence and intensity of his moral revulsion at the realities of Communism. Why the depths of his loathing of Stalin, whom he somewhere avows he would have liked to assassinate? He would never rage against a disastrous storm or shake a fist at an erupting volcano. He can bring himself to imagine a Communist system without the particularity of a Georgian Stalin, but apparently not a Communist system without a massive apparatus of terror and a Gulag which require someone to play Stalin's role. One can with some justification, however, argue that a closer look at the multiple occasions in which "the health" or "life" or "the victory" of the Communist system was invoked to justify some moral outrage or infamy in the Soviet Union or mainland China, shows that such justifications were not infrequently dogmatic and question-begging manoeuvres to foreclose inquiry into different and less morally objectionable alternatives of action. Sometimes it may be true that when one says A, one must say B; Zinoviev seems to believe that after one has said A, one must recite the alphabet to the end. For him Communism was fated to happen, given the snarling enmities of mass communal life. But his conclusions follow only on the assumption that what has happened had to be. The alleged necessities and logic of events about which historians write are not always supported by the evidence. Often they betray intellectual impatience and moral insensitiveness.

Granted the presence of some determining tendencies in history, the fundamental weakness of Zinoviev's reading of the past and predictions of the future is his almost complete disregard of the existence of historical contingency. For someone who insists that his approach is empirical such blindness is extraordinary. Granted, the effects of a contingent event always presuppose the presence of elements that are themselves not contingent in the context. But even of events that have been predicted, there are significant aspects and consequences that are contingent (like the death of Gandhi after India was granted independence). More importantly for present purposes, the analysis of some great historical

occurrences reveals that among their significant causes have been contingent events – contingent not in the sense of uncaused, but in the sense of unrelated to the other intersecting causal sequences. The most striking illustration I can find is the occurrence of the October 1917 Russian Revolution itself, which gave birth to the totalitarian system so fateful for our time. In the absence of Lenin there is no good reason to believe that the October Revolution would have taken place. In the absence of Columbus, or whoever it was discovered America, America would have been discovered anyhow; and the same can be said of many other great events and inventions. But is this true of Lenin and the October Revolution? Zinoviev must answer affirmatively, but he will have a hard time establishing it on the evidence.

In a study published long ago on the relationship between possibility and limitation in history, *The Hero in History* (1943), I con-

Old Man redeemed

Steven Lukes

NORMAN GERAS
Marx and Human Nature: Refutation of a Legend
126pp. New Left Books. £14 (paperback, £3.95).
0860910660

This remarkable short book deserves to be widely read and not only by those interested in Marxology. For it achieves something rare in its field: rationally compelling proof. Not only does it conclusively refute a widely current legend about Marx's thought – that from 1845 it rejected the very idea of a human nature. It does so with striking elegance, economy and argumentative power, very much in the style of, though more narrowly focused than, what Geras rightly calls G. A. Cohen's "commanding philosophical work", *Karl Marx's Theory of History*. Like that work, it respects two constraints identified by Cohen: "on the one hand, what Marx wrote, and, on the other, those standards of clarity and rigour which distinguish twentieth-century analytical philosophy". It also offers valuable suggestions as to what Marx's actual theory of human nature is, what sort of a theory it is, what reasons might lead people to reject such a theory, and why these are bad reasons.

The major recent exponent of the legend Norman Geras refutes is Louis Althusser, who has maintained that Marx's "total theoretical revolution", in founding historical materialism, involved replacing "the old couple individual/human essence in the theory of history by new concepts (forces of production, relations of production, etc)". As the old couple tottered off to the old folks' home, the New Science was born. Geras brilliantly shows that, far from rejecting a theory of human nature, Marx advanced one and that his historical materialism required him to do so.

Starting from a useful distinction between *human nature* as "the set of all (relatively) permanent and general human characteristics" and the *nature of man* as "the all-round character of human beings in some given context", Geras sets out to show that Marx did not deny that the former exists. He does so, first, by paying close attention to the main (and almost the only) text commonly adduced as evidence for such a denial. This is the Sixth *Thesis on Feuerbach*, in which Marx declares that "the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual" but rather "in its reality the ensemble of the social relations". He considers various possible interpretations of the Thesis and suggests that it plausibly means either that the nature of man is partially determined by the ensemble of social relations or that human nature or the nature of man is disclosed within such relations, or else it means both. It does not plausibly mean that there is no human nature, only such relations.

Geras's suggestion is then bolstered by reference to "the wider setting of Marx's ideas", first, by examining writings closest to the *Theses on Feuerbach* and then later writings. This examination clearly shows that human "powers" and "needs", and in general the dis-

cluded that if for any reason Lenin had not reached Russia in 1917 – and there were myriads of events that could have prevented his arrival – the October Revolution in all reasonable likelihood would not have occurred. I argued for the truth of this view even in my salad days as a heretical Marxist, in my *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* (1933). Leon Trotsky at first contested the conclusion, probably on the assumption that his presence in Russia, even without Lenin, would have led to the same historical outcome. But before he died he concurred with my non-Marxist conclusion. (Isaac Deutscher rebuked him for this lapse from orthodoxy.)

Zinoviev's deterministic scenario, which foresees the universal triumph of Communism, is incredible in its own terms. None the less, it may come to pass. If it does, the failure of nerve, intelligence and courage of the free world will have more to do with it than the ineluctable logic of events.

tion between what is "natural" to human beings and what is "social" play both a crucial explanatory and normative role in Marx's theory. As to the former, Geras argues that if diversity in the character of human beings is a large measure set down by Marx to historical variation in their social relations of production, the very fact that they entertain this sort of relations, the fact that they produce and that they have a history, he explains in turn by some of their general and constant, intrinsic, constitutional characteristics, in short by their human nature.

As for the normative dimension, Geras shows that, whatever else it is, Marx's mature work is "a moral indictment resting on a conception of essential human needs, an ethical standpoint, in other words, in which a view of human nature is involved".

Not only does Geras show that in Marx's thought there is "the supposition of a common human nature from beginning to end". He also nails once and for all the spurious reasons, political and pseudo-theoretical, that have led many who deny this to accept a view – which they falsely attribute to Marx – whose intrinsic absurdity he successfully displays. One political reason is that a theory of human nature is inherently reactionary, "used against socialism and any project of radical change". True, some such theories are so used, but others have a "critical and progressive edge". Another reason is that such a theory is said to be "idealist". But to reject such a theory on principle is itself to "divorce humanity from the natural world – in particular from *other species*, which for their part are never denied to possess an intrinsic nature". Another reason is that general characteristics of humankind cannot be isolated ontologically from social determinants. But it is no argument against the existence of the former that "they do not form a *separate* reality, ontologically separate from qualities that are culturally induced". If such separation were required, then how could one speak of, say, "relations of production" or "the State"? Analytical abstraction does not entail ontological isolation.

One striking virtue of Geras's manner of argument is that he clearly separates the exegetical from the substantive issue, commenting acidly upon Marxists' "familiar tendency to want to claim the Old Man's blessing for one's own conception of things". He shows both that the view criticized is untenable and that the Old Man did not hold it, remarking, most refreshingly, that it would be wrong, however tempting in this case, to assume that, simply because something is false or incoherent, Marx could not have intended it. This Marx must have believed what is true is no more plausible as a supposition than that what Marx believed must be true. Both suppositions have already obfuscated enough issues.

Accepting neither, Geras succeeds in showing beyond any further question both that "Marx does not reject the idea of a human nature" and that "he was right not to do so".

Anthony Brewer's *A Guide to Marx's Capital* (225pp. Cambridge University Press. £17.50. paperback £5.95, 0 521 25730 1) goes through *Capital* chapter by chapter, setting each in the context of the whole, and explaining the technical terms.

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Southern death

Brian Morton

ERNEST J. GAINES
A Gathering of Old Men
214pp. Heinemann. £8.95.
0 434 28003 8
ELLEN GILCHRIST
The Annunciation
353pp. Faber. Paperback. £2.95.
0 571 13020 8

The body of a Cajun sharecropper sprawls in the grass. Candy Marshall, the young white owner of the plantation, insists that she has killed him. Within an hour or two, though, she finds herself joined by more than a dozen ageing black men, each doggedly claiming guilt, each carrying an ancient twelve-gauge shotgun, one barrel fired, loaded with the identical No. 5 shot which ripped open Beau Boutan's chest.

A Gathering of Old Men, Ernest Gaines's seventh novel, does not set out to be a murder mystery (though it eventually emerges that Parrain Mathu, the figure everyone is protecting, is not himself guilty). It recalls Gabriel Garcia Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*; the interest lies not in who committed murder or why, but rather in an isolated community's indifferent and passive response — even when forewarned — to the death of one of its members.

By reintroducing, half-way through his story, a sudden doubt as to killer and motive, Gaines adds an extra dramatic component. Each of the novel's chapters is narrated by a different character; one or two speak twice and Candy's fiancé emerges as the rational commentator. Boutan's death becomes the occasion for the kind of choric self-expression and historical examination which is so typical of Gaines's fiction (notably in *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* and *Catherine Carmier*), and which sets him apart from modernists such as Márquez and Faulkner.

Gaines's Bayonne is fundamentally different from Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha; it is unmistakably a black man's creation. Gaines is probably the strongest and most distinctive of the Southern black novelists; he was one of those who in the 1960s and 70s set his face against both Faulkner and later white writers such as Norman Mailer and William Styron, whose *The White Negro* and *The Confessions of Nat Turner* created a dangerous racial mythology stitched together out of miscegenation, historical revisionism, guilt, and a completely alien sense of heroic character.

The old men at Marshall Quarters in *Gathering* are anything but heroic. They are lame, arthritic, weakened by pellagra, fuzzy with catarrhs. Their history rests only in what they can recall. All are identified by two names, and each chapter is headed with a formal name, plus a nickname which is both condescending and dismissive and defiantly argot: Dirty Red, Chimley, Clatoo, Snookum. Much is made, at the end, of the murderer's insistence on being addressed as "Mr", an echo of "Miss Jane Pittman". These are not Compsons or Sartor-

ises, scarcely even *parvenus* Snopeses; the black graveyard the old men pass through on their way to the stand-off at Marshall Quarters is a mass of subsiding, unmarked family plots; yet it is the black families, both alive and dead, who stick together, nourishing the survivors with loyalty and, comically, with the pecans and fruit that grow from the grave-soil. The white families, most importantly the Boutans, fail in their loyalties; revenge passes into the incompetent hands of a Klan-backed group of thugs.

Communication is the novel's central theme. The whites — Boutans, sheriff, would-be lynchers — are dependent on radios and telephones, and even then manage to lose vital threads. The old blacks, after isolating themselves by ripping a telephone off the Marshall wall, resort to a bush telegraph of silences, gestures, hoots and whistles. (Names are significant again: Gil Boutan's white football-playing friend Thomas Vincent Sullivan is known as TV, not, he insists, for his initials but because he is a "vidiot", a television addict; Candy's fiancé Lou Dimes suggests slot machines and telephones. Among the blacks, the story-tellers, Snookum is George Elliot Jr and Chimley is Robert Louis Stevenson Banks.)

For all the poignancy and horror of the situation, *A Gathering of Old Men* is a fine comic novel. The final shoot-out is perhaps too obviously parodic but it does brilliantly convey Gaines's doubts about "white" means of resolving things: he turns a tradition of lynch-law fiction and film on its head. What emerges is further persuasive evidence for a new sensibility and style among black American writers.

If Ernest Gaines manages to overturn some of the clichés of "Southern fiction", Ellen Gilchrist goes some way towards reinventing them. The stories in her first collection, *In the Land of Dreamy Dreams*, were so strongly reminiscent of Carson McCullers and Flannery O'Connor that occasional references to Vietnam, "American Pie" and Equal Opportunity law came as a shock.

Gilchrist does manage, though, to avoid the overheated moral fervour of "Southern Gothic". Raised on the Mississippi delta, the "land of dreamy dreams", she now lives and writes in New York. This gives her a certain distance from her material, and a self-consciously modern concern with narrative form and with the processes of the literary imagination. Her South is an imagined place, a dream-escape; she is very little concerned with the actual South's landscape or history. Her characters are city people and her subject, almost invariably, is the set of imaginative strategies by which they fend off boredom, inertia, heat and the aimlessness of their lives.

The Annunciation, Gilchrist's first novel, is a highly "literary" book; the experience it describes is almost entirely second-hand, vicarious, mediated by somebody's imagination, filtered through drink, dope and fantasy.

Amanda McCamey is a would-be poet, lured from the hard-drinking whirl of New Orleans to Fayetteville in Arkansas to translate the sonnets of Hélène de Aurillac. Amanda is in the line of Gilchrist's other protagonists, living more in others' imaginations than in their own; they dream of being Zeldas Fitzgerald, of being loved by Hemingway's Colonel Cantwell, of having their feet bound and undergoing appalling labours like Pearl S. Buck's heroines, of the kindness of strangers: As a teenager, Amanda has a child by her cousin (a birth, incidentally, which leaves her infertile); the child is farmed out for adoption. Mother and daughter, both poets, lead parallel lives, masking their emotional and artistic infertility in obsessive tasks, games and self-examinings. The Biblical strain, hinted at in the title and in an epigraph from St Luke, is an ironical one, buried in mother's and daughter's search for each other.

It is hard to separate Ellen Gilchrist's failures of execution from the emotional failures of her characters. There are too many gestures redolent of the too many books they have read; they are prone to quotation, to aphorism — "It seemed to Amanda that near the smell of whiskey someone was always crying." Gilchrist's pages are marked by uneasy shifts of tense and grammatical mood, and while this reflects something about her southerners and their milieu, it also presents a confused verbal and

Northern lives

Patricia Craig

MARJORY ALYN
The Sound of Anthems
211pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £8.95.
0 340 34442 3

"And God save, as you prefer, the King or Ireland", Louis MacNeice wrote in his *Autumn Journal* of 1938, stating the alternatives for the Northern Irish in the plainest possible terms. If you're eleven, though, and susceptible to the charm of both factions, it may be difficult to work out exactly where your true allegiance lies. This, at any rate, is the problem afflicting Jennifer Marshall, the engaging heroine of Marjory Alyn's first novel, *The Sound of Anthems*. Jennifer, an orphan in true story-book fashion, is being brought up by her grandmother and Aunt Madge on the northern outskirts of Belfast. The Marshalls are among the three Catholic families inhabiting a predominantly Protestant street. Being one of the other sort means that Jennifer is cut off from the delights of the Girls' Brigade, with its smart navy uniform, and gets to attend the Victory celebrations only by the skin of her teeth. In 1945, the period of the story, the perennially tangled relations between Catholic and Protestant are further complicated by diverging Catholic attitudes to the war. The Marshalls' next-door neighbour, of the same persuasion as themselves, awaits the return of her soldier son and gleefully nails up alien bunting on the outside walls of her Catholic home. The Victory antics of Mrs Doran (the blurb inexcusably calls her Mrs Jordan) are an affront to Jennifer's formidable grandmother, a nationalist diehard with a perverse regard for Hitler: "with every thud of the hammer she'd go into a near tantrum, shouting 'Abomination', 'Turncoat', and 'That Judas'."

From her grandmother, and her grandmother's friend "Aunt Nin", Jennifer is familiar with stories of atrocities perpetrated against the nationalist people: "the tellers related how Catholics were murdered by the Black and Tans in the South and their counterparts, the B-Specials, in the North". These are "summer yarns" (winter is reserved for the supernatural), and they have a counterpart in the stories of imminent Catholic aggression recalled by Lynn Doyle in his autobiography *An Ulster Childhood*.

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Men at war

Savkar Altineli

BENJAMIN J. STEIN
The Manhattan Gambit
326pp. André Deutsch. £8.95.
0 233 97615 9

JACK FULLER
Fragments
224pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £8.95.
0 340 33774 5

Some wars become part of "popular culture", while others fade into oblivion: depending, of course, on their coverage by the media. The Korean War, which had the misfortune to take place during an interregnum when radio and the newsreel were beginning to lose ground and their rival, television, had not yet come fully into its own, has largely been forgotten, whereas the Second World War and Vietnam on either side of it are assured of immortality. Such better-known conflicts, however, present problems of their own for the fiction writer, who has to display exceptional originality to combat the numbing effects of over-exposure. Both Benjamin J. Stein and Jack Fuller live up to this challenge.

Stein's *The Manhattan Gambit*, an off-beat thriller, is, in fact, not without its irritating aspects. The narrative is so fragmented that for a long time the reader has to take it on trust that its various strands, involving German prisoners of war in America, Fifth Columnists, exiled atomic scientists, OSS agents, Heinrich Himmler and an overweight Irish cop from Los Angeles, are all working towards the

Jennifer, in whom Catholic feeling runs deep, is eventually obliged to convict herself of blasphemy and worse, in scenes nearly as funny as those in the Frank O'Connor story about a boy making his first confession. The fact that some of her friends are Protestant makes things difficult for high-spirited Jennifer. To add to the confusion, she herself is lumbered with a Protestant name and face — a legacy, it turns out, from her non-Catholic grandfather.

It's an eventful year. The ex-soldier, Frankie Doran, takes part in an IRA escapade and is promptly arrested, his service to the British Army notwithstanding. Jennifer, like many another innocent in a trouble spot, comes on a gun secreted in the cistern of her Aunt Nin's lavatory. A school friend, of impeccably Celtic ancestry and an Irish dancing champion to boot, is run over and killed on the Shore Road. As the Twelfth of July festivities loom, local Catholics prepare for a day trip to the South, a customary resort. Excursions to Dublin enable Northern housewives to stock up with cheap goods from the Republic, a purpose that obliges them to re-cross the border looking stouter than when they started out, with dutiable articles carried clandestinely in their underclothes. Jennifer, travelling south for the first time, observes how Northern patriotism asserts itself once the border is crossed: the scenery, "while impressive . . . couldn't hold a candle to the Glens of Antrim". This is the view of her wayward grandmother, who goes about cheerfully accommodating all kinds of inconsistencies in her outlook.

What is impressive about this book is its authenticity of feeling, which persists even when the details are wrong (Jennifer couldn't have been reading *School Friend* in 1945, as no periodical of that name existed between 1929 and 1950). You could say that Graham Greene's celebrated concern with "the dangerous edge of things" finds an echo here, as Marjory Alyn focuses on the points at which pre-conceptions begin to disintegrate, and ambivalence comes to the fore. Unlike most authors who find in sectarian goings-on the stuff of comedy (ordinary comedy, that is, as opposed to black comedy), she eschews facetiousness along with its common accompaniment, local colour of a positively fluorescent kind. Jaunty and autochthonous as an Orange band, *The Sound of Anthems* proceeds on its unpretentious way, pleasing and illuminating throughout.

kidnap Einstein) promised by the blurb. The author's split infinitives ("We just happen to all be on the same side") tend at times to get a little out of hand, as does his habit of using all his foreign characters, including the German ones, as mouthpieces for exceedingly favourable comments on the American Way of Life.

On the plus side, though, there is plenty. Stein has an endearing taste for the absurd; the evocation of the period — Clark Gable advertising war bonds on the radio, DeSoto Fire-domes and Packard V-12s in the streets, bands playing "Don't Fence Me In" and "Moonlight in Vermont" — is splendid, and there is an enjoyable coast-to-coast chase with some fine accompanying descriptions which manage to temper the pro-American propaganda with a genuine feeling for American landscapes.

Jack Fuller's *Fragments* is a shorter and much tidier book. When Billy Morgan, a young college graduate, is drafted and sent to Vietnam he meets the charismatic James Neumann and becomes a horrified witness to Neumann's efforts to help the inhabitants of a remote village called Xuan Tue, which led with crazy logic to a bloodbath. Fuller is very good on the frustrations and humiliations of the conscript's life, and on the reactions of men under fire. The main triumph, however, is the unpretentious way, in which, Neumann's involvement with Xuan Tue, at first protective, then possessive, and finally destructive, is made to serve as a comment on the entire American involvement in South-East Asia. This is an elegant, restrained, elegant novel which succeeds where louder and more insistent works have failed: in making some sense of the bitter experience which television is howl-teaching us to call Vietnam.

Stein's *The Manhattan Gambit*, an off-beat thriller, is, in fact, not without its irritating aspects. The narrative is so fragmented that for a long time the reader has to take it on trust that its various strands, involving German prisoners of war in America, Fifth Columnists, exiled atomic scientists, OSS agents, Heinrich Himmler and an overweight Irish cop from Los Angeles, are all working towards the

Prodigies in the grass

John Butt

JOSÉ DONOSO
A House in the Country
Translated by David Pritchard and Suzanne J. Levine
352pp. Allen Lane. £9.95.
0 7139 1668 0

The novels of this remarkable Chilean writer have so far attracted less attention than those of other stars of the Latin-American boom (García Márquez, Vargas Llosa, Fuentes and Borges), but *A House in the Country* may alter that. José Donoso shares with the Argentine, Ernesto Sabato, a haunting, often obscure complexity — which is, obviously, also in the tradition of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* — driven to bizarre extremes by a ferocity and seriousness that one occasionally misses in some of the more famous Spanish-American writers.

This is a strange, beautiful and sinister novel, about the Chilean oligarchy, families, the temptations and conflicts in one or more adolescent minds, and the relationships between independence and repression, official and unofficial truth. It is set, probably, in the nineteenth century, in a vast mansion sur-

rounded by a wall of lances and a vast plain of dense grass stretching to a distant range of blue mountains. In the house live seven families, their thirty-five quaintly named children, and an army of servile but sadistic retainers. The plains are inhabited by natives who — so the parents say — are cannibals. The novel opens with the departure of the grown-ups on a long-delayed picnic, and during their absence the children, in the course of a strange, sanctioned game called "La Marquise est sortie à cinq heures", rebel and admit the "cannibals" to the house, which by now has been invaded by the teeny grass.

From the children's point of view the parents' absence lasts a year — long enough for deflowerings, pregnancies and quantum leaps to maturity. The servants are sent ahead against the elders' return; in a blood-bath they slaughter the natives (who are inoffensive) and restore a fragile image of the old order, simultaneously taking elaborate and futile measures to abolish time and establish the parents' claim that they have only been gone one day. The black sheep, Wenceslao, leads an escape into the forest of grass which, now Autumn is near, threatens to smother everyone who does not retreat to the city or into underground cellars away from light and truth, in a dense fog of clinging, downy seeds. On the way

he and his few cousin disciples obey their cousin Anadeo's last request and eat him; one says in Spanish "I love you so much I could eat you". The parents return, and many more prodigies ensue.

To say that this novel is "about" Chile, when the author constantly admonishes us not to forget that it is a self-generating fable divorced from reality, seems grossly unfair. The reader ought to take on the book without preconceptions; otherwise images of Pinochet or Allende will constantly float between him and the improbable, disturbing characters and their fates. But a political reading can hardly be ruled out, since the author actually shows a few pages of the manuscript to one of the book's real-life models, who can make nothing of it: "a refinement and opulence that we've never had, though I don't deny that we do sometimes dream of it". One wonders whether even Donoso's nerve nearly failed at this point. But, he declares of his model, "I write as I do so people like him won't recognize themselves — won't admit to it, anyway — or understand what I'm saying about them." Realism always ends by getting itself approved for being "didactic or useful": "artifice is a sin for being useless and immoral, whereas the essence of realism is its morality". The portentous craziness of the book is meant to shock us, which it

does, as well as dazzle and intrigue. How small so much "fantasy" writing seems in comparison with this weird, brutal and hilarious allegory of revolt and repression.

Donoso uses a Spanish which is appropriately unreal, shorn of its roots in living conversation, sententious and full of faded, neo-classical gentility which suits the preposterous setting. David Pritchard and Suzanne J. Levine often hit off the musty grandeur of the original, but, especially in the dialogues, are occasionally too literal and incongruously colloquial: I was more than once driven back to the Spanish version. It would be a shame if English-speaking readers, who will have enough to adjust to among these peculiar pages, were put off by clumsy sentences which do the original less than justice.

The 1983/84 Sinclair Prize for Fiction, an annual prize of £5,000 for an unpublished novel "of social or political relevance", has been awarded to *Scorched Earth*, by Edward Fenton. Short-listed for the prize were *Death City*, by Linda Anderson; *The Marriage of Anna Maya Potts*, by DeWitt P. Henry; and *The Bus Conductor Hines*, by James Kelman. *Scorched Earth* and *The Bus Conductor Hines* will both be reviewed in next week's TLS.

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Philosophy of the Literary Symbolic
466pp. University Presses of Florida
(distributed in the UK by TABS). \$37.50
(paperback, \$17.50).
081307437

In 1930 Arthur O. Lovejoy published *The Revolt against Dualism*, an account of various assaults upon epistemological and psycho-physical dualism, "the supposition that all apprehension of objective reality is mediated through subjective existents, that 'ideas' forever interpose themselves between the knower and the objects which he would know". Hazard Adams's new book is an episode in that continuing revolt: it proposes "the literary symbolic" to refute the various forms of dualism by which, he thinks, criticism has been disabled. "My effort", he says, "is to rehabilitate the symbolic by insisting on a notion of it as the creator, through intellectual contrariety, of culture." In another version he advocates "secular creative expression".

The dualism Adams opposes is represented by such pairings as subject/object; symbol/allegory; feeling/thinking; reverie/analysis; dream/thought; soul/body; music/statement. The pair he studies most elaborately is symbolism/allegory, beginning with those Romantic writers who, in an effort to escape from "a language all the rules of which positivism had imposed", exalted some version of symbolism and deprecated every version of allegory. The first part of his book is an extended survey of this prejudice in Hegel, Goethe, Schelling, Coleridge and Carlyle. Adams also looks at the other prejudice, in favour of allegory: as in Walter Benjamin and Paul de Man; especially in de Man, who favours allegory because it takes for granted the failure of signs or symbols to coincide with what has to be expressed. A chapter on Blake complicates the question of symbolism in ways crucial to Adams's high argument; it leads to an account of "symbolic" in Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Wilde and Yeats. Later chapters concentrate on various critical concepts which have to be qualified or appropriated to allow for the argument; the concepts of dream (Freud, Jung, Bachelard), fiction (Croce, Valhinger, Kermode), form, or rather, symbolic form (Cassirer, Langer, Eliot, Vivas), myth (Joseph Campbell, Mircea Eliade, Philip Wheelwright, Paul Ricoeur), archetype (Northrop Frye), and antimyth. Adams's word for the pure form of scientific thought, which he studies mainly by glossing Thomas Kuhn and Gerald Holton. Finally, Adams makes a space for his argument and distinguishes it from the several forms of phenomenology (Heidegger, Jaspers), Structuralism (Lévi-Strauss), Deconstruction (Derrida, de Man) and Hermeneutics (Gadamer, and Ricoeur again).

The programme has apparently developed from Adams's meditation on Blake. In 1955 he published *Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision*, and while he is reluctant to quote himself, he might have indicated to his readers that Yeats's misreading of Blake is crucial to the present argument, and that the notion of contrariety has been formidably present in his mind for many years. Adams's programme, in effect, is 'Lo's in Blake's *Jerusalem*: to build and rebuild "the stubborn structure of language", not only as an act of "original creation", but to repair damage already done. Lo's, according to Adams, is "the creative spirit of time", the container and maker of significant time, and he has to rebuild a structure "that is always turning by deterioration into its spectral negation and threatening to surround him in the form of determining history". Equally, Adams's "literary symbolic" is Blake's, especially where he describes Blake's "secular" view as suggesting "that we create symbolic worlds, and that there are for all practical purposes the only worlds we have". (By "secular" Adams means an attitude that "presses for separation from miraculism and the idea that the symbol either incarnates or stands in a fallen state for a spiritual mystery".) But Adams has to rescue Blake from Yeats's dualistic interpretation. In *A Vision* Yeats quotes Blake to the effect that "contrariety is

not a contrary". The difference is that contraries are positive. But Yeats forgot the difference and presented in Blake an authority nearly useless to Adams. Dualism is negation.

Adams's project is a contrary vision. Faced with any manifestation of dualism, he looks for a "contrary" which he posits as a greater form of opposition: in that form the distinction itself is on one side and, on the other, the denial of the distinction in favour of a term in which neither side is negated. "Difference/indifference and subject/object are opposed by 'identity'; symbol/allegory is opposed by the 'secular' symbolic." A contrary is not a synthesis, because "synthesis always involves a negation". "My dialectic", Adams says, "like Yeats's, does not provide for Hegelian synthesis, but for the constantly renewed conflict of Heraclitus." The form of thought which drives toward identity is what Adams calls myth.

A philosophy of the literary symbolic requires, according to Adams, two things: "first, a concept of language as 'creative', abolishing the opposition of language and thought, in which thought is always accorded the primary position and language either copies or signifies it; second, a concept of language as fundamentally poetic, abolishing the opposition of language and poetry deplored by Croce". Further: "the theorist of the 'secular' symbol offers a concept of artful creativity which regards language as a liberation . . . and yet presumes not the task of disclosure of being but the task of conservation of value and improvement of culture." Finally: "The task for art is not the mystical one of knowing another, of seeking before making. Rather, it is the constant development of a cultural reality from the potentiality of experience through particular linguistic acts and what is built from them."

What does this programme amount to? Adams's revolt against dualism takes the form of positing a praxis of contrariety: its models are Heraclitus, Vico, Blake and — on the strength of his aesthetic of conflict — Yeats. In literary criticism, this praxis features a poetics turned toward the future, not an epistemology fixed upon origins. The poetics is then predicated upon a "creative" language. It seems to me that the programme narrowly, but with adequate decisiveness in the end, avoids the

Heideggerian hyperbole of attributing creativity to language as such: it allows clearly enough for a poet, an artist, to undertake the desirable project of culture. But Adams can endow language with creative and expansive powers only because he ascribes to it the attributes another critic would invoke through such terms as poet, genius, will, desire and intention. As de Man has remarked in a recent essay, "if we say that language speaks, that the grammatical subject of a proposition is language rather than a self, we are not fallaciously anthropomorphizing language but rigorously grammaticizing the self: the self is deprived of any locutionary power, to all intents and purposes it may as well be mute". That language itself knows anything, as Harold Bloom remarks in *Agon*, "a considerable trope". That it makes anything is an even more considerable one. Adams stays far enough back from that particular mystification, at least in the end, but I would have welcomed an earlier indication of his attitude to the diverse claims of semiotics, psychology and poetics.

Clearly there is tactical merit in positing that "making" can evade the problems involved in "seeking": it corresponds to the merit of evading the past tense by projecting a lively future. But the merit may be specious. Adams says that "what we call poems are first of all makings, events in which thought and meaning take place"; but he doesn't indicate how either of them takes place, or what it means to say that takes place in language. In the same chapter he suggests "that the poet's materials are always for him a potentiality to be worked up into form"; but he doesn't say what that "form" is, or how or when it may be recognized as such. Presumably the work of art is the actually which corresponds to potentiality as a future tense corresponds to the present which enables it to come about. But that presumption doesn't solve any problem. In the end, Adams's theory seems to me a nuance of the general Romantic theory of the human imagination, the nuance being that it abolishes whatever opposition there may be between the poetic imagination and the language it declares its own. The opposition is abolished by letting intimations of creativity and liberation suffuse poet and language alike.

Organically affective

Chris Baldick

WILLIAM E. BUCKLER
Matthew Arnold's Prose: Three Essays in Literary Enlargement
116pp. New York: AMS Press (distributed in the UK by Eurospan). \$19.50.
040464817

This is not a book about Arnold's prose, as prose, but an Arnoldian credo. William Buckler adopts Arnoldianism not as an incitement to critical discrimination but as a faith, and as a true believer has written what must be the only book on Arnold to contain not a single word of objection, qualification or even questioning of his master's voice. His stated purpose is to extend our understanding of Arnold as a critic, hence the "enlargement" of the subtitle. Inflation, though, is the more accurate term for the undertaking: Buckler's aim is to pump up a reputation which he feels has been wilfully punctured by unnamed *Deconstructionist* vandals. The consequent puffing whips the vocabulary of Arnold's classical humanism into a hyperbolic froth beneath which little critical substance can be found.

Buckler starts out in Arnold's own style by quoting himself, to the effect that Arnold's criticism is "rooted in an irrefragable faith in the organic, transformational, conversational affectiveness of literature". The three essays which follow, on *Literature and Dogma*, *Essays in Criticism (First Series)* and *Culture and Anarchy*, ought to add some substance to this opaque assertion, but they provide instead a series of tributes in the same manner. *Literature and Dogma* is seen as being "organic in a meaningful way with the inner history of the Bible itself", and displays "superb, dynamic critical organicism". Arnold's essay "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" embodies a "universally human insight" and

implants unspecified "affirmative processes" in the reader, also organically. *Culture and Anarchy*, Buckler argues, achieves such timelessness that its message would apply, if a few names were changed, with equal force to the 1980s and to the fifth century BC.

The central contention of the book is that there is a considerable poetic element in Arnold's prose; and a little examination of his syntax, rhythms and diction might have vindicated this reasonable case. It is not asking too much to expect, in a book on Arnold's prose, that the question of his language might at some point be touched upon. But poetics, it seems, need not be bothered with words:

In what sense then does one speak of the "poetics" of "The Literary Influence of Academies"? In the same sense that one might speak of the poetics of St Paul's Cathedral or of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony or of the Mona Lisa . . .

Buckler's "poetic" reading rests instead on making a virtue of Arnold's evasion of logical reasoning and on the unimpressive argument that since his literary criticism is a criticism of life, it conforms to his celebrated definition of poetry. Ultimately the poetry of Arnold's prose is located in the sympathy of "the reader" — a character whose assent seems guaranteed in advance and whose actual identity is all too clear.

Without any attempt to ground this idea of poetry in the language of Arnold's prose writings, Buckler's appeal to archetypes, myths and metaphors somewhere beneath their surface fails to convince. The effect (and I suspect the purpose) of all this is to place the virtues of Arnold's prose entirely beyond textual definition. This is a sure sign of ideology, as Buckler's frequent references to Carlylean hero-worship help to confirm. The best that can be observed of this very poor work is that it contains four or five pages which deal usefully with the dramatic qualities and strategies of the Arnold persona in *Culture and Anarchy*.

Amazing grace

Tod Papageorge

JOHN SZARKOWSKI and MARIA MORRIS
HAMBURG
The Work of Atget
Volume III: The Ancient Régime
186pp. Gordon Fraser. £30.
0860920720

This is the most beautiful collection of Atget's pictures ever gathered together, which is to say that it is as beautiful a book as any produced in the history of photography. The second half of it, especially, dominated by pictures made between the end of the First World War and Atget's death, at seventy, in 1927, describes an incomparable inventiveness and grace.

Like the other volumes of this study, *The Ancient Régime* is built around Atget's examination of a broad yet well-defined subject — in this case, his work in the Bourbon gardens of Versailles, Saint-Cloud and Sceaux — but because it contains so many of these post-war pictures (eighty out of 119), and because they are so consistently remarkable, the book nets less as a report on Atget's exploration of cultivated gardens than it does as a description of his late work and, implicitly, of his evolution (or sudden emergence) as a self-conscious artist. It is astonishing that, at the end of his life, Atget should have finally embraced his gifts, and turned them so directly to the purpose of expressing his sense of the world; yet to judge by these photographs, as well as those from this period found in the rest of the study, this is essentially what occurred. Whether this change was caused by the war and what Henry James called "the horrible sad difference war brings with it", or by some other trauma born in the pain and constrictions of old age, its existence, and the sadness often touching it, suffice these final pictures.

None of this is meant to suggest that, for the first twenty years of his photographic life, Atget's work was uninteresting or had been compromised by his career as a document-maker specializing in the subject of Paris. Although these pictures were openly descriptive and often blunt in their use of light, they were also, at their best, charged with a bright, animal attentiveness (created as much by Atget's uncanny sense of camera placement as by whatever feeling he may have had for his subjects) that distinguishes them from the

Specifics made universal

Robert Adams

Dorothea Lange: Photographs of a Lifetime
With an essay by Robert Coles
184pp. Aperture: Distributed by Phaidon. £35.
089381 1009

In recent years there have been several biographies of photographers (Stieglitz, Weston, Lange) that did not teach us much because the authors did not feel it necessary to discuss at length their subjects' pictures, but instead concentrated on a mire of personal failures — pettinesses, self-deceptions, hardnesses of heart — from which artists suffer along with everyone else, but above which they occasionally rise in the practice of their art. Paul Strand described the sort of biography photographers understandably want: "Your photography is a record of your living", he said. *Dorothea Lange: Photographs of a Lifetime* is that sort of welcome corrective to gossip. It reproduces well and in ample size the majority of Lange's best pictures from throughout her career, and then augments them with an essay by the psychiatrist and writer, Robert Coles.

Coles presents both an outline of Lange's life and a meditation on her efforts to be truthful about her subjects; he himself has studied similar people in the American South, and knows about the difficulties. He respectfully acknowledges the force of her achievement: "She made us look at them, look into their faces." The text is enriched, too, by the editors' decision to include, mixed with the pictures, Lange's own memories of how she worked,



Atget's "Saint-Cloud, 9 h. matin, mars 1926", reproduced from the book reviewed here.

work of any other photographer. For example, the sixth plate in the book, dated 1901 — a low, asymmetric, canted apprehension of a staircase at Versailles — overwhelms with its power and mystery anything else being done at that time in the name of artistic photography.

It is as the inventor of a style, however, not as the self-describing poet he became, that Atget would be remembered if he had not returned to photography and to a less active commercial practice following a two-year in-

terruption caused by the war. It is only with his late work that the lithic, preconscious energy which had informed his earlier photographs is transmuted into an active, authorial presence located within the pictures themselves. This presence can be felt animating the fogs, mists and vapourish sunlight that Atget employs in many of these photographs to draw them, edge to edge, into a series of shimmering, cohering screens. It can be perceived more directly, though, by considering the force with which

loving observer of human stance, of the architecture of the body at work and rest. She was also an exceptional landscapist; though she almost never photographed wilderness, she evidenced an enjoyment of natural light and geographic scale, as part of her pictures, that was no less intense than that of her friend Ansel Adams.

Lange's sensitivity to natural light registered, of course, something beyond loveliness; James Agee referred to the quality as "the cruel radiance of what is", and it forms a part of the context for Lange's other subject, fortitude. "I many times encountered courage", she said; "I have learned to recognize it when I see it." The bravery she was concerned to picture was usually set against the most common ordeal — tiredness, having to last. It is perhaps an especially American subject, endurance being one of the few glories open to many in a country where freedom is more valued than justice.

Dorothea Lange suggests ways and reasons Lange succeeded as an artist. Visually, for instance, we note that a majority of her best pictures do not stress so-called photographic vision, that is, composition relying on abruptly cropped borders with important subjects at the edge, divided in two; instead her finest pictures seem usually to be of whole things (and thus seductively to approximate to normal vision). It is as if Lange's gift was to discover artifacts and people that were already perfectly revealing, rather than to create them by special framing. The beauty of her subjects seems to come from within them, and we are moved by her readiness to be anonymous before it.

Atget takes the statues, urns, pools and trees of the parks described in the book and — using scale (often diminished), camera position (often unpredictable), framing (often abrupt), and his unique sense of picture-construction — stages them to act out their parts in a great, affecting drama. By being placed near the edge of a picture, a stone lion (plate 84), staring across the field of the frame, claims what it sees as its dominion; in the photograph of a statue, in shadow, from behind (plate 83), as its right arm reaches up into a neighbouring tree's tangle of new buds, the life of both (art and nature) join in one vital line.

Apart from the notable individual photographs in the book, there are also several memorable sequences, made up of pictures taken of the same or closely related subjects, which demonstrate how Atget studied and learned from his work. The most visually remarkable of these is the luminous group that he did around the reflecting pools at Saint-Cloud, where he often travelled after the war to photograph. As eloquent as, and even more moving than this elegiac meditation on illusion, is the valedictory series composed at Sceaux during four months of a frail spring in 1925. These photographs end the book and, in their density of feeling, crown Atget's work.

It would be difficult to overpraise this book and the study it continues (the fourth and last volume is due next year). The reproductions of the pictures are, again, stunning. In many cases more legible than the fading prints they copy; and Maria Morris Hamburg's introductory essay, "The Structure of the Work", adds another invaluable piece of research to her formidable study of Atget. With his "Notes to the Photographs" John Szarkowski has produced something that will undoubtedly be discussed (or dismissed) for its eloquence, rather than for what it says; yet these brief thoughts and conjectures, so specific and clear, constitute a kind of primer on how to look at photographs. Here, for example, he writes about a pair of pictures taken of the same cluster of water lilies:

The two pictures together comprise a precious first lesson for aspiring photographers, and an essential last lesson for photographers who have learned everything else. The maple leaf that floats in the lower right corner of plate 47 is the same one that appears in the lower left corner of plate 48. By moving a meter to his right, the photographer has turned the light sky dark, and the dark lilies white. Either picture might with equal justice be called "documentary" by one who finds a comforting security in the term.

From Coles's essay we learn that a part of what brought her to look so long and successfully into others' faces must have been her own suffering. She was crippled by polio as a girl, was subject to serious illness throughout her life, and was tormented by her need to balance her responsibility to her children (by an early, unsuccessful marriage) with her talents as a photographer. One senses that she undertook work with the disadvantaged because she had experienced, in degree if not always in kind, their pain. Without such knowing, sympathetic identification it is hard to imagine anyone retracing, tired, on a hunch, twenty miles of rainy highway to search out, in a tent in a muddy field, the person who would become the subject of the picture "Migrant Mother".

Women have occupied almost from the beginning a major place in the history of photography, and it is one of the strengths of this book that it accepts that as a fact, and treats Lange as a gifted human being rather than, exclusively, a gifted woman. She endured difficulties specific to women, but she benefited from being a woman too, and Lange, who had a subtle and probing mind, acknowledged it. While working for the FSA, for instance, she discovered that she was able to win the confidence of her subjects in part because she was female. And she noted that her last years of independent work were possible because, as she jokingly said, she was "kept", by her husband. The evidence is, as Coles cites it, that they held each other in such affection and respect that to be kept was to be set free. In this sense, among others, Strand was right — her photographs were a record of her living.

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Letters

'The Sinking of the Belgrano'

Sir, - In their response (Letters, March 23) to my review of their book *The Sinking of the Belgrano*, Arthur Gavshon and Desmond Rice suggest that I am arguing that "the demands of a coherent military strategy" in contemporary crisis situations will invariably, if not always, transcend the judgments of democratically elected leaders.

My argument was somewhat less dramatic. Once hostilities have begun, especially in situations where there is a real risk of losing, straightforward military considerations will inevitably weigh as heavily as, if not more than, the immediate requirements of diplomacy with political leaders. This to some extent must depend on the prospects for diplomacy at the time. Hence my concern to establish, using only the information contained in the book, that while the Government could well have known that the Peruvian initiative was under way when authorizing the sinking of the Belgrano, there was no reason for them to believe that it was making any progress.

The issue as I understood it was whether the undeniably unfortunate effect of the sinking on the Peruvian initiative was the result of deliberate policy or the unintended consequence of action taken for other reasons. In my review I sought to establish that there was a perfectly straightforward military explanation for the attack on the Belgrano that does not depend on dark political motives. I was not trying to score political points for or against the Government.

The authors, along with Tam Dalyell MP, seem to find my explanation - that the attack was part of a military offensive - even more outrageous than their own preferred explanations. Leaving aside for the moment the much more fundamental question of whether the war was worth fighting (about which my feelings are, to say the least, mixed), once the Government had determined on re-taking the islands from the Argentine, offensive action of some sort was clearly inevitable. Military offensives tend to involve loss of life. If the military had not been allowed to go on the offensive, then Britain would have been defeated and the demands for an inquiry would have been even greater.

This does not mean, and I certainly did not write, that either the Government had lost control to the military or that it "did not follow a political approach" - only that it dared not ignore the military logic. As Lord Annan has pointed out (Letters, March 30), there is a world of difference between overall political direction and operational control. What interested me in the review, and in my earlier article which Gavshon and Rice quote, is the extent to which there seems to be a general assumption that wars can be fought largely according to political rules with only slight regard for the exigencies of the military situation. It was precisely because of these assumptions that the sinking of the Belgrano did turn out to be a political disaster.

Gavshon and Rice do not challenge my interpretation of events directly but instead cite my "inaccuracies and misleading statements". Of the three examples they give the first is a point of detail for which I apologize, and the third, on the relationship between the negotiating process and the start of the hostilities, a question of interpretation and I am sticking to my view. The second is quite unfair. In my review I reported their information to the effect that the carrier, *Venturino de Mayo*, turned for home in the early hours of May 2, and then went on to report that others, with equally good Argentine contacts, had suggested something different - that the carrier did not return until dawn after being unable to launch its Skyhawks. Unfortunately my references were removed in the editing, so for the record they are an article in the *Sunday Times* on June 5, 1983, and the book *Air War, South Atlantic* by Jeffrey Ethell and Alfred Price (Sidgwick and Jackson, 1983, pp.75-6). I only drew attention to contradictory information. I am in no position to judge. Whatever the truth it does not affect my main point, which was that Argentine commanders were as anxious as their British counterparts to inflict a substantial blow on the enemy and were not hanging around waiting for the outcome of the latest

diplomatic initiative.

As for Mr Dalyell (Letters, March 23), I am glad he is not a conspiracy theorist. But then why, immediately after the publication of my review in the *TLS*, did he put down Parliamentary Questions to the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence asking if I had had any meetings over the relevant period with their departments?

LAWRENCE FREEDMAN,
Department of War Studies, King's College London,
Strand, London WC2.

Sir, - In defending the decision to sink the Belgrano, Noël Annan tells us (Letters, March 30) that Argentina initiated attacks on the Task Force soon after the end of Haig's mediation attempts. In this context he argues that the Belgrano incident was justified.

In making this case he is factually incorrect. It was Britain which escalated the military confrontation, and the manner in which this was done provides the essential context for the attack on the Belgrano.

Less than eight hours after Haig's final declaration, with diplomatic and economic support now coming from the United States as well as EEC countries, Japan and the Commonwealth, Britain chose to initiate attacks on Argentine units on the Falklands. These attacks commenced with the Vulcan raid mounted from Ascension Island and continued with the much larger attacks from Task Force aircraft a few hours later, early on the morning of May 1. Only then did Argentine planes commence attacks on the Task Force ships. The rationale for the British attacks was that we were using "minimum force in the pursuit of a diplomatic settlement" and that the use of force was directed towards cutting the Stanley runway and thereby enforcing the blockade of the islands.

Even a cursory glance at the military tactics actually employed shows this to be nonsense - the action was aimed at causing the maximum casualties and disruption by the best technical means available. Thus the Task Force raid on the Stanley base used a mix of air-burst high-explosive bombs and cluster bombs, the latter best described as sophisticated examples of the nail-bomb principle and certainly the most effective anti-personnel munitions available to British forces.

Even the naval barrage by Glamorgan, Alacrity and Arrow later the same morning used a sustained barrage of 4.5 inch shells fused for air-burst - inconsistent with an attack on the runway but fully consistent with an anti-personnel attack.

This British demonstration of "minimum force" caused over fifty casualties and took place within twenty-four hours of the end of the Haig mission, while the Peruvians and others were still seeking a peaceful settlement. It was followed the next day by the Belgrano incident which, as Gavshon and Rice have shown, has been followed by a series of contradictory justifications by the Government and its apologists.

By the end of that first weekend in May, some 400 Argentines had been killed. Two days later, the first of over 250 of our servicemen died in action.

The harsh reality of the Falklands conflict is that the British Government sought war when peace was still possible, and in Fortress Falklands, we are now paying the price of that policy.

PAUL ROGERS,
Deanfield, Hallas Road, Kirkburton, West Yorkshire.

'Cub'

Sir, - Tragically the dead keep mounting on all sides in Beirut and elsewhere in Lebanon, but Peter Reading regards all this as mere "foolishness". I am not suggesting that his poem "Cub" (March 23) should be concerned with what the Lebanese are doing to each other or how the P.L.O. trained young boys to use weapons, or even with why Israelis made the mistake of thinking they could safeguard their northern border by this action. What is objectionable is that Reading reserves all his pathos for the boy, "a slight soldier", "aged 12". Never mind that he was not blowing bubbles, but in fact had been taught to shoot and hit his enemy. The Israelis, on the other hand, are

riding in a "fat, juicy jeep" and are called "Old Testament shitters".

"Thick hate is still in the genes", Mr Reading tells us. Putting aside that stupid genetic libel, may I ask whose hate? Poetry may have its own truth, but the situation is painful, and this glib and easy antisemitism is an insult to your readers.

SHIRLEY KAUFMAN,
7 Rashba Street, 92 264 Jerusalem, Israel.

Sir, - We were appalled to see that the *TLS* was willing to publish Peter Reading's poem "Cub" (March 23). Mr Reading has written what we believe to be a straightforwardly antisemitic statement masquerading both as a poem and as a piece of reportage.

The scene Reading describes is that of a boy of twelve ambushing a "fat juicy jeep of Israelis", shooting one of the soldiers and then being killed in his turn. The moral of the poem: "Well, nobody looks for a motive from these Old Testament shitters - thick hate is still in the genes." This moral is anticipated by describing the Israeli jeep as fat and juicy, presumably a metonymy for the soldiers in it.

The conjunction of Old Testament and shitters raises some interesting questions. Why are people who believe in the Old Testament called shitters? Does he mean that he, as a believer in the New Testament, would have acted differently, turning his other cheek when shot at by a terrorist, of whatever age? To an unprejudiced observer, the motive for the soldiers' action, which for Reading is only hate, would seem to be quite clearly self-defence. The killing of a child is indeed a very grave matter, but the soldiers act, according to Reading's own account, to prevent him from using his sub-machine-gun against the rest of them.

It has been suggested that the poem might have been intended to be an exercise in dramatic monologue. But it so falls to signal that fact that it does not achieve the double perspective which typifies the genre. Since the poem does not distinguish adequately between poet and persona, the poet and his publishers must take full responsibility for the poem's antisemitism.

No subsequent discussion of "Cub" and our letter should underrate the serious distress this poem has caused. We would regard any quibbling about how to read the poem as inappropriate. Antisemitism is too serious a matter to be trivialized.

PETER HOLLAND,
Trinity Hall, Cambridge.
HANNA SCOLNIKOV,
Darwin College, Cambridge.
RTA GOLDBERG,
Trinity Hall, Cambridge.
OLIVER HART,
London School of Economics.
CHRISTOPHER INNES,
York University, Toronto.
LEO SALINGAR,
Trinity College, Cambridge.

□ "Cub", like much of Peter Reading's work, is - as Peter Holland and his co-signatories half anticipate - a dramatic monologue, a genre that often poses problems of interpretation. The title is applicable not only to the twelve-year-old boy but to the poem's narrator, a news agency reporter. That understood, what follows clearly implies a critical (as well as imaginatively sympathetic) comment on this reporter's coarse but intense response to the incident he describes. We think it a good poem and are glad to have published it, though we are sorry for any offence it has caused to those who have, in our view, misunderstood it.

T. S. Eliot

Sir, - I would like to add to a statement in Matthew Evans's letter (March 16) in which he mentions a T. S. Eliot manuscript, "The Love Song of St Sebastian", in the McKeldin Library at the University of Maryland.

There is, indeed, a copy in the McKeldin Library, but the Huntington also has two copies of the poem, in addition to Eliot's letter to Aiken dated July 25, 1914. One manuscript is a two-page carbon copy of a typescript, with Eliot's autograph corrections re-created by Clarice (Lorenz) Aiken. The second copy is a two-page, typewritten, later draft of the poem.

The Huntington wishes to reassure readers that both copies still reside in its Conrad Aiken Archive.
SARA S. HODSON,
Huntington Library, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, California 91108.

Antoine Watteau

Sir, - Anita Brookner's review of Donald Posner's *Antoine Watteau* (March 23) baffles me. In the first place, despite its generous length, it gives little idea of the quality of the book under review (useful but pedestrian may be her implied verdict).

Second, Dr Brookner proposes a reconsideration of Watteau; but what does she propose? Watteau, she says, left no explanation of his paintings. "There is no way of arriving at Watteau's actual reasons for doing what he did." But over the page, she claims: "A painter's intentions are contained, sometimes emblematically, in his paintings. He makes no other statement. If additional explanations of his pictures are needed, then those pictures are, by definition, incomplete." And her conclusion appears to be: "It is possible that he was an instinctive artist who could not explain himself, that his ideas had very little independent existence as such, that his meaning was always latent because he stopped short of explaining it even to himself, let alone to others. It is possible that his was a nature moved entirely by impulses which he could not justify."

This simply will not do. Why is it assumed that only facts about Watteau's intentions are capable of explaining his pictures, of illuminating his achievements? Though his paintings may strike us as mysterious, this needn't in itself present a mystery. And though his work may be "the antithesis of the heavily-plotted, Italianate, text-ridden style of the French Academy" this does not render it inexplicable, given our lack of knowledge about his intentions. For public, institutional explanations, familiar to art historians, will also serve.

As Dr Brookner says, Watteau was not French, he was Flemish. She does not add that almost all his motifs have precedents in Netherlandish painting. In particular, the *fête galante* had been familiar in the North since the Middle Ages and had flourished in the young Dutch Republic in the early years of the seventeenth century. Its three principal forms, the courtly *Garden of Love*, theological *Sin of Luxuria* and astrological *Realm of Venus*, shared established characteristics: an enclosed garden, a demi or pseudo-paradise inhabited by opulently dressed, handsome young people who idled away their lives in love-making, games of chance and, above all, music. Whether the tenor was moralistic or, on the contrary, *carpe diem*, the essential theme was the brevity of youth, beauty and sensual pleasures. It did not call for dramatic narrative; it was a matter of atmosphere, mood, a musical evocation of erotic reverie.

The genre had not only its own strong traditional character, but its inherent temper, so to speak. Of course, if Watteau was, indeed, irrational, intuitive, melancholy and compulsive, this would, no doubt, have sharpened his insight into the potential of the theme. And certainly, he was outstandingly imaginative and skilful in representing the crucial polarity of desire and reality by piquant oppositions: of actor and role; the perfection of art (antique sculpture in wittily various roles) and the frailties of flesh; the grandiose confidence of his models (Veronese and Rubens) and his own intimate, minor-key variations. But the system of oppositions he developed would have been readily recognized in the society of connoisseurs and amateurs that provided his patrons.

Now Dr Brookner must be familiar with all this, but still, for some reason, holds it to be no kind of explanation - and that reason (I can only conclude) is that she prefers no kind of explanation: "It is possible that his was a nature moved entirely by impulses which he could not justify." What most profoundly worries me is that Dr Brookner appears to welcome this outcome. She praises Posner for "a readable statement of all that is already known, an anniversary volume that reveals but does not resolve puzzles" and for, in the main, confining "his attention to running the rule over all the known works and laying them out in order". Dr Brookner appears to be condoning the restriction of the art historian's role to that of archivist.

Today we may hear many professional art historians, including other reviewers in your

Art History number, express doubts about art historians' competence to deal authentically with the true stuff of art. But more alarming are the other young art historians (a growing number) who doubt the existence of a true stuff to be dealt with; art, they maintain, is a social epiphenomenon, an index of ideology. Faced with this scepticism, to be convinced of the ineffability of artistic excellence is to throw in your hand.

J. M. NASH,
Department of Art History and Theory, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex.

Balkan History

Sir, - When I read Norman Stone's view of Balkan history as being "all a record of poverty, disease, oppression, torture, rape and murder" (March 16), I felt rather like a Pakistani mother-in-law on hearing Ian Botham's remarks on her country's hotels and food. Such old journalistic clichés and such academic arrogance are no longer accepted for "darkest Africa". Even cricketers no longer get away with it in Pakistan. Europe, however, is still fair game, especially "darkest Europe". Mr Botham had been playing in Pakistan for twelve days, and the Professor of Modern History Elect at Oxford had been reading Barbara Jelavich's two-volume *History of the Balkans*, written precisely because of the resilience of such views. Her message - that attention should be paid to the study of the area on its own terms - does not appear to have reached some quarters. People in this country thus continue to be surprised when the region explodes, alarmed when it is about to be overrun, get starchy-eyed about its palikars and partisans, pray for the long life of its stabilizing autocrats. That "heroism of aspiration, fortunately, cuts across an otherwise squalid picture" does as much to redress the balance as the cricketer's "low mood" excuses. Teachers of the history of all sorts of "far-away countries" are more modern than ever in Britain's universities; Modern History *tout court* obviously does not reach that far. Trade, diplomacy and influence suffer accordingly.

STEVEN K. PAVLOWITZ,
Department of History, The University, Southampton.

Polish Communism

Sir, - Zbigniew Pelczynski's review of Maciej Pomian-Szednicki's work *Religious Change in Contemporary Poland* (March 2) makes disturbing reading. Pelczynski's benevolent view of Communist Poland appears to be either naive or ill informed. Is it true that the Polish regime since 1956 has relied on "industrialization, urbanization and late and socialist education to produce the desired result", ie, secularization? Pelczynski is obviously unaware that attempts at forced secularization of marriage and, indeed, family life have been pursued relentlessly, with couples being forced by order to marry in state register offices, the ceremony being forcibly divorced from the church wedding, as opposed to the civilized arrangements made in this country where a civil ceremony is combined, on request, with a church wedding.

In a predominantly Catholic population, the State pays (out of that population's taxes) for an "energetic programme of secularization, including a belligerently anti-religious publication, *Argumenty*, beautifully published and comfortably housed in central Warsaw, while Catholic publications are run from dilapidated, inadequate premises and are repeatedly refused increases in their print orders to meet the overwhelming demand from their reading public.

Secular weddings, funerals and "baptism" ceremonies are desperately encouraged by the authorities through subsidies (loan of historic coaches from museums for secular weddings, etc) on the one hand and, on the other, through considerable pressures to refrain from participation in religious ceremonies on those occasions. It takes a very brave and a very unambitious officer of the armed forces to marry in church. It takes a very determined officer or senior civil servant to bury his close relative according to the religious rites.

Mr Pelczynski criticizes Pomian-Szednicki for accusing the regime of totalitarianism and claims that "the down-playing of terror; the

toleration of cultural diversity and above all the accommodation of the Communist regime to the existence of a flourishing, independent and critical Church make the label 'totalitarian' singularly inappropriate to Poland". A truly fantastic claim by any account. Hundreds of people are currently in gaol in Poland merely for expressing their opposition to the ruling Communist Party. These are not terrorists or agents of foreign powers or individuals plotting to overthrow the regime by force but simply individuals openly voicing their protest.

Others are hounded to death directly or have their relatives hounded to death as a means of national intimidation. Instances of close relatives of nationally known figures "committing suicide" or dying in unsatisfactorily explained circumstances are becoming more and more numerous. We shall be glad to supply a whole grim catalogue to you of such instances if necessary. Or, less dramatically but on an equally painful level, one can count mass sackings from work and prevention from taking up any employment of individuals suspected of disaffection to the regime (in a country where the State is ultimately the only employer and where employment benefits are non-existent because full employment is theoretically guaranteed by the constitution) as being often more painful than imprisonment. If these methods do not constitute terror, then a new definition of the word is needed.

The "toleration of cultural diversity" surely exists only in Pelczynski's imagination. It is hard to accept that the forcible dissolution of PEN clubs, the film-makers' association, the Writers' Union, etc, indicate toleration of cultural diversity. Is Pelczynski aware of the powers unconstitutionally enjoyed by the censorship authorities in Poland? Is he aware that, not only a particular work or part of a work can be censored, but that an author or other creative or performing artist can be censored and proscribed for life without a hearing or any possibility of an appeal?

The existence of a "flourishing, independent and critical Church" is a separate complex chapter of Polish contemporary history and Pomian-Szednicki's admirable book covers the subject better than it could be tackled in a mere letter.

TADEK JARSKI,
Solidarity with Solidarity, 7 Quintin Avenue, London SW20.

The Rosenberg Case

Sir, - Unfortunately you let yourself be taken in by Igor Kopytoff's letter (March 9) which you published without checking his reference. He attributes to Philby the statement that "Fuchs was instrumental, through his confession, in uncovering the espionage ring in which he was involved with Harry Gold, David Greenglass and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg." For a professional spy like Philby, it would have been impossible to make such a statement since he knew that Fuchs had never had any connection with either Greenglass or the Rosenbergs and, therefore, was never involved in an espionage ring with them.

A checking of the source (Kim Philby, *My Silent War*, New York, Grove Press, 1968, p.225) shows that the above statement does not belong to Philby, but is an editorial note, which happens to be erroneous. So, how could this piece of information be "introduced into the debate and seriously discussed"? Sorry for my fellow-Montrealer, he should have known better than that!

JACK GOLD,
McGill University Library, Montreal.

Aspects of Shakespeare

Sir, - Though, as M. J. Hugill says (Letters, March 23), Agate may have used the then-famous "O weederdee!" refrain, it did not in fact originate with him, but with Charles Morgan writing in *The Times*, October 15, 1936. JULIE HANKEY,
8 Millman Road, Reading, Berkshire.

In John Golding's review of *Boccioni* by Maurizio Calvesi and Estor Coen (March 23), the reference to a letter written by Boccioni was misdated "March 1911": it should have read "March 1912".

Basil Blackwell

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276 pages, paperback £6.50 (0 631 13649 5)

COMMENTARY

A drama of dislocation

Peter Kemp

The Jewel in the Crown
Granada TV

Disorientation is the guiding force in Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet*. The work's most deadly characters – Ronald Merrick, Mildred Layton – manoeuvre with macabre rigidity, like zombies in the graveyard of the Raj, through the defunct routines of a once ossified, now disintegrating society. But – as things fall apart in India because the centre of authority cannot hold on – the best, and second-best, of the British find they lack all conviction. Missionaries lose their faith; administrators, their nerve. Traumatic alienation drives some to suicide. Breakdowns are rife – from Barbie Batchelor's decline into mute nihilism to Susan Layton's screaming schizophrenic collapses.

Stressing its characters' dislocation, *The Raj Quartet* makes a high proportion of them social or family misfits, orphans, exiles and émigrés. And it keeps them constantly on the move. Many of the work's key events happen in transit – on roads or railways. Roaming round Scott's panorama – as India heaves itself through the transfer of power, and a world war pitches people around Europe and Asia – are crowds of displaced persons absorbingly dragging with them massively detailed life-histories.

But, though Scott's characters travel, they never reach satisfactory conclusions. Racial, cultural and social splits entrenched in India hamper or engulf them. Division is prominent in each of the settings the work favours. Mayapore, bisected by a river that separates the British cantonment from the native quarters, shows this at its starkest. The hill-station Pankot affords a vantage-point for surveying the snobberies that send hair-line fractures through the colonial coterie. Mirat, for all the serene symmetry of its marble palace, is a dangerously lop-sided state, with a Muslim prince precariously ruling a largely Hindu population. While some damagingly try to reinforce such gulfs, others find that attempting to bridge them can be disastrous – most harrowingly so in the case of Daphne Marneers and Hari Kumar.

Paralysis or catastrophe seem the grim alternatives during this terminal phase of British influence in India. Codes formerly followed have become meaningless. Persons hitherto occupying a clearly defined social niche start to lose their bearings. And Scott compounds the atmosphere of disorientation by his fictional techniques. Jumping unpredictably from character to character, the books offer an almost dizzying variety of viewpoints, none of them

authoritative. Apparently familiar narrative patterns are sabotaged. Expectations repeatedly get thwarted. Characters assumed to be of central importance – like Daphne Manners – abruptly disappear. Relationships – such as that between Sarah Layton and Guy Perron – seemingly destined for prominent fulfilment remain unsettled and slide into the background. Narrative climaxes are deliberately anti-climactic – as when Perron, in the work's final pages, doesn't meet Kumar. Generating a strong sense of dislocation, all this also makes the books compulsively readable: not only is it impossible to guess what's going to happen next, it's impossible to guess who'll be where when it does.

These features of Scott's work are the antithesis of everything television conventionally opts for. But – taking an imaginative risk that has resulted in consummately riveting drama – Ken Taylor, in his adaptation *The Jewel in the Crown*, has done his best to respect and replicate them. Unavoidably, his version has had to sacrifice a number of characters, and some of the history of those who are included. It also necessarily dispenses with much of the doubling back and leaping forward with which Paul Scott makes such play. But enough is kept of these devices to give a sense of the work's technique. The penultimate episode, for example, startlingly opens with a funeral. Only gradually does it become apparent that it is Merrick's; after which, the story line coils back and starts to unroll what led up to it.

Respecting, where possible, Scott's techniques, Taylor is very faithful to his themes. *The Jewel in the Crown* opens with Hari Kumar collapsed in an alcoholic stupor. He is on the edge of the river, the demarcation-line between British and Indian territory; and he has drunk himself into unconsciousness because meeting an unrecognized English friend has brought home to him the irreversible nature of his slide from Chillingborough to the Chillianwallah Bagh. Impeccably played by Art Malik, Hari Kumar – with his alternative name, Harry Coomer – is the clearest instance of the divided, uprooted individual. Others cluster round him; Daphne Manners – whose clumsy delicacy Susan Wooldridge movingly caught in a performance of intense precision and poignancy – an upper-class girl uneasy in the Raj community because of her sensitivity, and Ronald Merrick, a lower-class man uneasy in it because of his sensitivity. Clutching his swagger-stick as if it were a talisman to ward off feelings of class discomfort, Tim Pigott-Smith brings out the way Merrick is a man trying to exorcise a sense of social inferiority by exercising a sense of racial superiority, as well as a homosexual spurred by guilt into sadism, avidly humiliating males who awake the im-

pulses that humiliate him. Especially emphasized is Merrick's abrasive ability to create unease – a power even retained by his ashes: the case holding them, in the final episode, is embarrassingly mistaken for a tiffin basket.

Like Merrick, Barbie Batchelor is snubbed as a class-intruder by many of the Raj community. Dislodged from one bolt-hole after another, relentlessly deprived by Mildred of any foothold for her self-respect, she nightmarishly tumbles from voluble robust decency into a fierce dumb despair – something Peggy Ashcroft's unsparing, compassionate performance, with its harsh, thickening modulations through chokings of shanie and cloggings of bronchitis, rendingly conveys. Seeing life finally as a matter of preying and not praying, the one-time believer in the Dove and Life-to-Come watches as vultures swoop – in a central image – on the pickings of decay.

It is Barbie, too, who focuses on another of the work's symbols: the length of lace with its netted butterflies – a reminder that all the story's characters are entangled in the web of history. Concentrating on transition – something which even George Fenton's score emphasizes by an audible move from Raj to

raga, opening each episode with imperial music but ending with Indian – the work chronicles a jolting process from colonialism to chaos. It is the individuals caught in the turmoil who receive most attention, though. Profusion and detail of character are Scott's fictional forte. Capitalizing on this, *The Jewel in the Crown* – as glittering and multi-faceted as its title suggests – specializes in polished, sharply-cut portrayals of the books' enormous range of individuals. After the fine performances of the first protagonists, a host of others move across the foreground: Geraldine James's powerfully restrained Sarah, with her pensive firmness and elbow-hugging gravity; Eric Porter's Brodsky, a *tour de force* of tone and accent; Charles Dance's telling Guy Perron, strong but powerless in India; Judy Parfitt's magnificent Mildred Layton, continually reaching for her gin as if it were a mixture of fuel and anaesthetic; a splendid line-up of memsahibs with peaky, beaky faces above limp floral frocks, Rosemary Leach and Anna Cropper prominent among them; and a number of nicely groomed presentations of officers, all pink knees under long shorts and wet foreheads under forage caps, as India's climate and confusion take their toll of regulation dapperness.

A passionate predicament

Michael Tanner

VINCENTO BELLINI
I Capuleti e i Montecchi
Royal Opera House

"Can you think of one *real* conductor who has shown an atom of passion for Bellini?" asks the late John Culshaw in *Ring Recording*. The answer, since Richard Wagner was undoubtedly a real conductor, was always "Yes". The current run of performances at Covent Garden shows that Riccardo Muti, one of the outstanding conductors of our time, realizes Bellini's greatness, both in terms of musico-dramatic structure and orchestration, and the result is widely agreed to be revelatory. Even the first-night audience was evidently both excited and subdued by the sublimity of the work and the magnificence of the performance. Without indulging in tasteless extremes – taste, if not tastefulness, being of the essence in performing Bellini – Muti brought out both the violence of the background against which Romeo and Giulietta are highlighted, and the extraordinary intensity of their music, conveyed by the subtlest simplicity.

Characteristically, though Bellini is portraying lovers, there is almost no love music. Regret and fearful apprehension are all that love brings. As in *Norma*, the intensity of the feelings that the chief characters have for one another is a *donnée*, so there is no question of Bellini's showing their falling in love. Passion presents a terrible problem to be solved, rather than a state to be eagerly hoped for and sought out; in this respect Bellini is far truer to life than most of the Romantics. Romeo, with all the vehement confidence of a young man equipped with a mezzo-soprano voice of *agilità*, urges Giulietta to escape with him, but she is insistent that duty and honour count for more with her than love. The tenderness that they unquestionably feel, expressed in music of exceptional stillness and prolonged quietness, is primarily the result of their sense of a shared predicament: it never moves into erotic ardour. Animation is always an injunction to action, or at least resolution. The inward, poignant cavatinas are succeeded by cabalettas that can sound jaunty out of context, but desperate within it. So the two long scenes for the lovers are surprisingly full of remorse, reproach and contradiction. What sounds like tranquillity is actually suffering – there is no moment of happiness in the opera – and the only escape from that is death, either by heroic action against the alien world, or by total withdrawal. In such an atmosphere, Giulietta might as well have swallowed a genuine death-potion instead of expiring from grief after Romeo's death. Just as much as with most of Wagner's heroines, it is the condition towards which she naturally moves. All Bellini's admittedly im-

ited, but consummately deployed resources ensure an elegiac *Liebestod*. Wagner's lovers cease to be themselves by expanding to become the whole world; Bellini's sink to nothing. No reconciliation of the families follows; Lorenzo (an apothecary in this work) and the Montecchi curiously tell the head of the Capuleti that he is responsible for the lovers' deaths, and the curtain descends.

The opera goes from relative weakness to strength, another typical feature in Bellini. So does the performance. The luckless Tebaldo, who has the first aria, a rather stiff piece, is portrayed by Dano Raffanti in a style that I thought had disappeared north of Verona (the Arena, I mean). He stands squarely before the audience and vigorously execrates them, who generously applaud him. The chorus stand morosely among the Ionic columns which, in various formations, do service for all the settings, even Giulietta's apartments. The proceedings become more animated with the arrival of Agnes Balsa, a handsome though understandably haggard Romeo (in disguise, naturally), who threatens his opponents with "la tremenda ultrice spada". It's still not very impressive. But with the change of scene, and Giulietta's torments and confusions while awaiting Romeo, stunningly sung by Edita Gruberova with a command of bel canto style and to full expressive purpose, the work and the performance move onto a level which is maintained for the rest of the evening. The shifting emotions of the ensuing duet are perfectly registered by both singers, who have an exact understanding of the nature of Bellini's restraint. Simultaneously with one's delight at what is happening on stage, one notices, thanks to Muti's pointing of orchestral detail, never fussy or exaggerated, what a perfect whole Bellini has created, and how vulnerable his art is to indiscretions of performance. This is probably the finest performance of the work that has ever been given – it is certainly in a class apart from any other that I have heard, and it reinforces the point, *pace* Culshaw and others, that there is no opera in which the conductor isn't a crucial factor. The sparser the accompaniment, the simpler the melodic lines, the more important it is that the conductor should generate an atmosphere of total concentration. Performed in this way, the absence from Bellini's work of Mercurio, Paris, the Nurse, and so on is something that doesn't enter one's mind.

The monotony of the sets is a negative virtue, making the crossing of the stage by Giulietta's funeral procession in monochrome profile strikingly effective. Apart from that moment, there is no production to speak of – the two leading singers giving the impression that they have worked things out for themselves, to beautiful effect. It is a purifying and exalting experience, the finest thing the Royal Opera has achieved in a distinguished season.

Quarry for the connoisseur

Anita Brookner

The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse
Royal Academy, until May 27

There are at least two exhibitions lurking under the title of *The Orientalists* at the Royal Academy, or possibly three. The delusive third is not actually on the walls of the Fine Rooms but exists in some huge ideal venue, where Gros's "Les Pestiférés de Jaffa" hangs between Delacroix's "Femmes d'Alger" and Chasserieu's "Ali ben Hamed", and these are flanked by a sizeable selection of the works of Decamps, whose reputation in the nineteenth century was so high in this connection and who has now faded from sight. Most of the works in this ideal exhibition, and many more, are generously included in the splendid but unrepresentative catalogue, and of the whole ambitious enterprise it is the catalogue which will survive, destined for an honourable place on the library shelves. Sales of the catalogue must surely be helped by the reproduction on its cover of Renoir's delicious "Girl with a Falcon", painted before he left France, and in itself a whole encyclopaedia of Impressionist colourism, from the spangled gauzes of the girl's dress to the evanescent curtain drawn aside by her melting hand.

This brilliant picture, by far the finest in the show, begs the whole question of the attitude of nineteenth-century painters to the phenomena of Egypt, Syria and the Levant. For in comparison with the enormously important political and commercial transactions between Europe and the Near and Middle East, the pictorial response is literal, picturesque and weightless. Despite the size of certain works,

despite the foggy glamour of certain ceremonies, what surprises about the majority of the pictures on display is the curious absence of light. With the exception of J. F. Lewis, whose works are essentially miniatures, on however large a scale, and who concentrates on effects of sunbeams poking like fingers through elaborate lattice work on to immaculate rosy-checked almehs, the painters who made the pilgrimage to these distant and uncomfortable lands failed in their most important task, which was to celebrate the glare and refraction of a dazzling light which greys down vistas and intensifies shadows. It is as if they had an opportunity to discover Impressionism and inexplicably failed to do so, preferring to concentrate on exotica like fantasias and odalisques, Moorish baths and harem kiosks, camels and scaglios, Turkish letter-writers and pilgrimages to Mecca, carpet bazaars and whirling dervishes. It is ironic that the most perfect realization of the impact of the light is to be found in Flaubert's letters, which remain the best introduction to this chapter of what was essentially a European experience, for the indigenous peoples appear to have been untouched by it. The scrupulously and even tediously detailed descriptions of the East on view at the Academy convey none of the excitement, the dirt, the splendour, the liberation encountered by Flaubert on his voyage. At their best the pictures on view rise to the level of Pierre Loti. At their worst they are enlarged pages from a keepsake album.

The oils by Gérôme and the watercolours by Gleyre – the two artists most lavishly represented – preserve the glaucous flatness of a European north light. Guillaumet's large painting of a rotting camel carcass, entitled "The Desert", seems overlaid both physically

Lost in thought

Pat Raine

Reflections
Chelsea Cinema

The scenario is familiar: the lush corner of Ireland, the big house run to seed, its disoriented occupants, the scholarly stranger installed in the gate lodge. *Langrishe, Go Down?* No, the source of this particular screenplay is John Banville's short novel *The Newton Letter*, a much more compact work: Banville himself has carried out the adaptation, and the director (Kevin Billington) has clearly taken pains to preserve the pensive spirit of the book. In place of John Banville's graceful narrative we have a series of graceful images: Cork byways in a sudden shower, preoccupied figures in a summer field, some mellow interiors. The look of things is important, and in *Reflections* everything looks right, down to the hedge of wild roses drenched in rain.

However, from the title on, an element of pretentiousness is discernible in the undertaking. True, *The Newton Letter* (designated "An Interlude") is a reflective novel, full of people "lost in thought behind a tall window in which was reflected one tree and a bronze cloud". The hero, a fastidious historian engaged on a study of Newton, arrives with a suitcase in search of a lodging for the summer, and succumbs to the lure of the place with its air of romantic dilapidation and erotic promise – the latter quickly to be fulfilled. The barely perceptible plot concerns the historian's mistaken assumptions about the inhabitants of the house – owner, husband, niece and child. He takes them for Anglo-Irish gentry, until one of their relations speaks approvingly of an IRA atrocity; even then it surprises him to learn they're Catholics. This is particularly odd, as we're told he is a native of the district. The child, who is not the son of Charlotte Lawless and her husband Edward, he assigns to the niece, Otilie, his own current bedfellow. He gets everything wrong, but not comically wrong, concocting stories to fit the facts as he observes them, and missing a commonplace little tragedy being enacted under his nose. So much for the scholar's deductive powers.

It's a reflective novel, not a loquacious one; no character is exactly communicative, and in

the film, the paucity of dialogue puts a strain on the actors, who are required to express their feelings by other means. Looks and gestures bristle with significance abound. A fair amount of the action consists in standing and staring, not exactly riveting for the viewer. The hostile child, Michael, remains mute throughout. When the hero's feeling for one woman, Otilie, gets deflected to the other, Charlotte, he's afflicted with an irritating inability to complete the short observations he addresses to her: "Your son is very . . ."; "I don't know, I . . .". This speech block is soon extended to a writer's block: the masterwork remains uncompleted too. Questions, to which no answer is expected or offered, fall into the emptiness like stones. It's all, unlike the novel on which it is based, far too solemn-faced and inscrutable.

Occasionally, a wordless episode produces the right effect, as when a pair of lumbering ratcheters come striding out of a wood; more often, though, the characters, deprived of adequate speech, simply stand or sprawl like actors arranged in some portentous tableau. The problem involved here is the one about conveying unnatural behaviour without appearing to act unnaturally. Only Otilie, a gauche, whole-hearted Irish girl, greatly taken up with love, and given to the use of the expletive "Jesus", is meant to be at all talkative by nature; and Otilie's lines, perhaps wisely, are kept to a minimum here. Harriet Walter, who plays the part, turns in a rather odd performance, not quite up to the standard of excellence she set for herself as Cathy Raine in the television production of Ian McEwan's *The Initiation Game*: it's as if the struggle to master the Irish accent – only intermittently satisfactory – had taken precedence over everything else. Of the other three main figures, Gabriel Byrne as William Masters the historian is suitably serious and aloof in manner; Fionnula Flanagan (playing Charlotte Lawless) is troubled and withdrawn to the appropriate degree; and Donal McCann is good as Edward Lawless, the ramshackle husband, always seeming to be on the verge of some incontinent action or disclosure. The predominant effect of this film, though, is to remind us that certain works of fiction, particularly the more intense, uneventful and thoughtful kind, simply do not transfer well to the screen. *The Newton Letter* is one of them.

COMMENTARY



"Le Nu bleu - souvenir de Biskra", 1907, by Matisse, from the exhibition reviewed here, and reproduced in its catalogue, edited by Mary Anne Stevens (256pp., £7.90, 0 297 78417 X).

and metaphorically by the legacy of Sodomi and Gomorrah. Thomas Phillips's over-exposed portrait of Byron in Greek dress has him standing in a room darkened not by shadow but by heavy underpaint, while John's T. E. Lawrence in Arab dress might be wearing some idiosyncratic version of cricket whites. The most puzzling objects must be the four Delacroix: the "Moroccan Military Exercise" from Montpelier, the "Arab Chief Visiting a Tribe" from Nantes, the "Finnatics of Tangier" from Minneapolis, and the "Lion Hunt" from Stockholm. For these are so dark as to be disturbing. And despite the many claims made by Delacroix for the thrilling effects of his Moroccan journey, it is clear that the country of his mind was very overcast indeed, and only the "Death of Sardanapalus", painted before he left France; and the "Jewish Wedding", here represented by Renoir's marvellous copy, convey the liquid and hallucinatory quality of another climate, another world.

There are two kinds of Orientalist and both are represented here, though very unequally. There are the painters of the physical Orient, and of these the most dignified is David Roberts, who alone conveys the massive nature of the temples of Philae and Dendera, in

still, sandy, monolithic works which will surprise many visitors. He is amply supplemented by the oils of Edward Lear, who had the original and logical idea that the East was largely a matter of different perspectives. The other Orient, the Orient of the mind or of fantasy, is best represented by the sly little "Odalisque" of Ingres. Ingres, of course, never visited the East, and would have considered the opportunity to do so, had it presented itself, as utterly beneath his dignity, but the animality and the ennu of his nude, stage-lit, carefully set between stage flats and against a stage backdrop, indicate the power of this particular obsession: a world of plump and secluded women, as disturbingly attractive as they were reputedly unavailable, and therefore a true quarry for the connoisseur.

The Cook's tour aspect of the East – all that most of us are likely to know, although the painters of the nineteenth century were more adventurous – is represented by Dauzats and Müller, Fromentin, Marilhat and the inescapable Gérôme. The dim sour light of the nylonghung Fine Rooms and the puzzling miasma of industrial solvent which hangs about the place may assist in the impression of transit, though not necessarily of arrival on distant shores.



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Folk learning

Derick Thomson

John L. Campbell, Margaret Fay Shaw and
Francis Collinson
National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, until
May 31

Scotland in the last half-century would have been a much less interesting place had John Lorne Campbell decided to become a soldier or a pioneer of Empire somewhere. Instead, having taken qualifications in Rural Economy at Oxford, and having studied Gaelic with John Fraser, he decided to devote his life to the Highlands and to Gaelic. It was a kind of public apology for the way his class had abrogated the role of Gaelic leadership.

The first published fruits of his resolve came early, when *Highland Songs of the Forty-Five* appeared in 1933 (a second edition is on the point of appearing, from the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society). Since then there has been a long stream of publications of many sorts and sizes, on the eighteenth-century poet Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, on the place of Gaelic in Scotland, on West Highland public houses, on Father Allan MacDonald of Eriskay, the second sight, Edward Lhuyd, and above all Gaelic folk-songs, especially waulking songs. It is probable that his interests turned do-

liberately to song under the influence of his gifted wife Margaret Fay Shaw, an American who came to South Uist in 1928, drawn by her interest in traditional folk-songs, married Campbell in 1935, and after a short period in Barra moved with him to Canna, which he had bought. There they settled down to a life of farming and scholarship. Margaret Fay Shaw had already noted many Gaelic songs and other lore in South Uist, and photographed people and implements and houses widely. Her *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist* appeared in 1955.

Francis Collinson was the final recruit to the trio, being called in to provide transcriptions and musicological analysis for the magisterial three-volume series of *Hebridean Folksongs* (1969, 1977, 1981), while at the same time he was at work on his *The Traditional and National Music of Scotland* (1966) and *The Bagpipe: the History of a Musical Instrument* (1975).

This exhibition vividly portrays the many-faceted work of the trio, featuring early photographs from the Aran Islands and from South Uist, John Lorne's co-operation with Compton Mackenzie in the Sea League in the 1930s, the occasional *feu d'esprit* such as his poetic satire on Alasdair Suarach, as well as original MSS, musical scores, and the large number of books and pamphlets and articles that came from these busy pens.

The irreproachable daemon

Patrick Carnegy

PETER HEYWORTH
Otto Klemperer: His life and times
Volume 1: 1885-1933
492pp. Cambridge University Press. £15.
0521 242932

Otto Klemperer's conducting career began in the Mahler era and continued until the late 1960s when, though partially paralysed, he inspired London audiences with his Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms and Mahler. But although Klemperer had always conducted the classics, the great years of farewell offered only glimpses of the turbulent achievements that had gone before.

Klemperer was a musician who did not waste words. As Peter Heyworth remarks at the outset of this first volume of his biography, its subject might have raised an ironic eyebrow at its length. But in truth, no aspect of this indefatigably researched and finely written book needs apology, least of all its length. For Klemperer's was a life that cannot properly be unfolded without a thorough understanding of its complex background. In supplying that, Mr Heyworth makes a major contribution to the history of European musical life in the first thirty years of the century.

When the young Klemperer emerged from his musical studies he was regarded as a promising pianist, but from the moment in 1905 when he conducted the off-stage band for Mahler's Second Symphony in the composer's presence, his path was set. Mahler's personal recommendation, scrawled on a visiting card, secured him a junior conducting job at Angelo Neumann's German Theatre in Prague. It was a frustrating, opera-tiden apprenticeship, from which he was rescued in 1910 when a second commendation from Mahler, this time in a telegram from New York, "Klemperer zugreifen!" ("Grab Klemperer!"), won him an assistant conductorship at Hamburg, his home town. He made his debut there with *Lohengrin* and electrified the critics: Two years later he was given two-and-a-half weeks to prepare his first Ring cycle. It is no wonder that the pressures imposed by the repertory system nearly made him give up: at one point he wrote to a bookseller in Prague asking if he'd take him on.

Among the many testimonies from this period cited by Heyworth, none rings truer than that of Lotte Lehmann, whom Klemperer was coaching as Elsa:

Klemperer sat at the piano like an evil spirit, thumping on it with long hands like a tiger's claws, and dragging my terrified voice into the vortex of his famished will. . . . [Klemperer] belonged to the category of conductors who made one tremble, yet one was blissful when he was content. . . . Toscanini made one do things because it hurt him if one didn't. Klemperer one obeyed with guilt and fear. . . . He was always a terrible demon. . . . one was hypnotized.

From Hamburg he moved to Strasbourg in 1914 as deputy musical director under his old teacher Hans Pfitzner. Although he is now somewhat discredited, Pfitzner was a central figure in his day, and Heyworth brings him sharply into focus. Pfitzner commanded Klemperer's respect not least because of his total identification with what he was conducting. When, during the second act of *Die Meistersinger*, it was evident that the Beckmesser was too ill to continue, Pfitzner handed over the baton to an assistant, had himself shaved and made up, then went on stage to play the role in the final act. Pfitzner's passionate belief in *Werkreue* (fidelity to the work) exercised a lasting influence on Klemperer.

Klemperer's first job as full musical director was at Cologne (1917-24), a post not wholly congenial to a man of his temperament and inclinations, for there "opera was popular precisely because it so rarely provoked thought". Fritz Koenig, the Intendant, had no comprehension of *Werkreue*, believing that it was the producer's function to decorate the action with business. Klemperer did as much as anyone could have done to counter this attitude. He put on Busoni's *Turandot* and *Arcadian*, and it was at least partly under his influence that he reacted against the "upholstered orchestral textures" which had been typical of pre-First World War performances, including his own, which were still the style of conductors like

Bruno Walter, Kleiber and Furtwängler. Klemperer saw the point of Busoni's anti-Wagnerian stance and his belief that *Junge Klassik* (rejuvenated classicism) was the right path out of the late-Romantic impasse. "Wenn Wagner mir gefällt, gefalle ich mich nicht", he remarked in 1917 ("When I'm into Wagner, I'm out with myself"). After he left Cologne, at the age of thirty-nine, he never conducted *The Ring* again.

The world that dawned in 1918 was, Klemperer said, one "in opposition to Wagner". The immense changes that took place at the end of the war were closely mirrored in Klemperer's person and career, and are charted skilfully by Heyworth. Klemperer emerged with one foot in the late-Romantic world of Mahler, Pfitzner, Schreker, Zemlin; and the other in the brave new worlds of Busoni, Janáček, Stravinsky, Křenek, Hindemith and Weill. After the war, music could no longer mean "German music".

In May 1922 he introduced *Petrushka* in a double bill with the first performance of Zemlin's *Der Zwerg*. Although, predictably enough, *Petrushka* was derided by the chauvinists as "wry and dehumanized", "a silly pantomime", "the work of a Dadaist", and so on, Richard Strauss and a number of others were enthusiastic. This was the beginning for Klemperer of a long association with Stravinsky's music. It was an association that, strangely enough, did not include conducting *The Rite of Spring*, apparently because he protested that he couldn't beat its irregular metres.

In 1921 he chose an all-Schoenberg programme for his Berlin conducting debut, but he was soon in retreat from the expressionist aesthetic to which those works of Schoenberg which he admired belonged, and he made no secret of his dislike of the new dodecaphonic idiom. A month later he returned to Berlin for a performance of Mahler's Second Symphony which became a corner-stone of his reputation as a Mahlerian. "Sobriety and ecstasy are the poles of his conducting", reported Walter Hirschberg. "He has the ability to sink himself in a work so as to convey its innermost core, to place formidable competence and composure at the service of emotion, so that intellect and emotion become one. . . ." Although his gestures on the podium were still extravagant, it was not only the New York critic Lawrence Gilman who observed (1924) that the histrionics were no longer the whole man but were a mask concealing disciplined sobriety, an almost puritanical severity.

He hovers over his orchestra like some fabulous, gigantic bird-man, menacing and inescapable. He grows audibly at his men, and once at yesterday's performance he almost roared. . . . But these are external things. In Mr Klemperer's projection of the music we found nothing of the melodramatic, nothing of the sensational.

There were triumphant visits not only to America but also to the Soviet Union. In Germany he was now in some danger of annoying both the powerful lobby of aggrieved Weimar conservatives (who found his interpretations over-analytical and intellectual), and supporters of Busoni's new classicism, who accused Klemperer of backsliding because he still performed the late-Romantic masterpieces.

From Cologne, Klemperer moved in 1924 to Wiesbaden, where he was to spend three of the happiest years of his life. But it was the call to Berlin for which he was waiting, and this came in 1924 when Leo Kestenberg, the principal figure behind the musical life of the young Weimar Republic, offered him the directorship of Berlin's second opera house, the recently reopened Staatsoper am Platz der Republik, adjacent to the Reichstag, and known as the Kroll Opera. Kestenberg's somewhat confused aim was that it should be both a wing of the Volksbühne (providing opera for a broad public) and a workshop for operatic renewal.

Klemperer's achievements at the Kroll are one of the most inspiring chapters in the story of how opera, at last shrugged off moribund nineteenth-century performing practice and became a living art. Repertory classics were given performances which repudiated the Wilhelmian ostentation almost universally aimed at in the old court theatres. Klemperer could now fulfil Mahler's old ambition of being not just the conductor but "the guiding stage-artist of the opera". One of the greatest hits at the Kroll was a production of the original one-

act version of *The Flying Dutchman*. The work was drastically demythologized, the Dutchman being stripped of his beard and Senta's companions set not to spin but to make fishing nets. T. W. Adorno observed that the Kroll had "mobilized a reserve of actuality in Wagner . . . which will explode today or tomorrow" - as it did nearly fifty years later in Patrice Chéreau's Bayreuth production of the *Ring* in 1976.

The many modern works given at the Kroll included Hindemith's *Cardillac* and *Hin und Zurück*, Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, *Mavra*, *Petrushka* and *The Soldier's Tale*, five works by Křenek, Schoenberg's *Erwartung* and *Die glückliche Hand*, Weill's *Jaeger*, Janáček's *From the House of the Dead* and Debussy's *Jour*. Klemperer took on nothing lightly (he rebutted attempts to pin a "modernist" label



on him) and projects sometimes floundered. He backed Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (he took moral exception to the brothel scene), and out of Schoenberg's *Von Heute auf Morgen*, *Wozzeck* would have seemed a natural for the Kroll, but Klemperer never conducted it, nor was Berg's orchestral music ever played at the Kroll concerts.

All told, the repertoire was not the kind one would naturally associate with a theatre supposedly dedicated to the operatic education of the common man. The incongruity between Klemperer's aims and those of the Volksbühne was an instrumental factor leading to the Kroll's closure in 1931 (a disgraceful piece of cultural politics, expertly untangled by Heyworth). Kestenberg's faith in "the oneness of socialism and music" was itself part of the problem. For if he didn't exactly believe that the *Volks* must love the highest *Bühne* when they saw it, he did believe that education would get them there in the end. But the middle-brow Kroll clientele had little interest in difficult modern works, wanting only *Carmen*, *Aida*, and the other staple fare of the wealthy bourgeoisie. The audience, said Klemperer, had expected "big singers, big arias, big applause".

Although Klemperer fought hard to save the Kroll, he found himself caught in a revolution which went beyond his own, primarily musical, aims. He clashed with his dramaturge, Hans Curiel, over the latter's choice of designers like Moholy-Nagy and Schlemmer. It was one thing that the stage should be purged of stage business and decoration; quite another that Bauhaus constructivism should take its place.

When the Kroll closed, Klemperer joined Leo Blech and Erich Kleiber as one of the three principal conductors at the Linden Opera. But this was unsatisfactory from every point of view. Klemperer regarding the repertory conditions there as inimical to the principles on which he had based his professional life. Meantime the Nazis were moving swiftly to power, though Klemperer seemed not to sense the danger. On April 1, 1933 he read Roger Sessions's prose-poem he had written in praise of the New Order in Germany. The next day he informed his "orthodox brother-in-law" that the Jewish question was basically a religious one, suggesting that a Jew-

ish palatine guard should be formed to protect Hitler. Assuming this was not a Klemperer Wit, Heyworth is surely right in hazarding that such notions were at least partly sparked by Klemperer's belief that the Weimar authorities had betrayed the Kroll. On April 3 he finally woke up and was persuaded to flee to Switzerland. There could have been no more ironic afterword to the Kroll experiment than that in 1933 its building became the new home of the Reichstag. Looking back years later, Klemperer felt that his subsequent career (first with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, then with the Budapest Opera and finally in London) was an anticlimax.

Heyworth's superb documentation of Klemperer's first fifty-two years reveals a complex, and often paradoxical, relationship between the conductor's personality, his achievements and the legend that has sprung from both. Some adjustment is now needed to Klemperer's reputation as mighty musical intellect, as a magus with irrefutable insight into the works he played. In the German-speaking world, and even beyond it, his image is that of a torch-bearer of moral truth and in through music, a conductor with an "uncanny ability to convey the idea as well as the sound".

Yet one also recalls the wilfulness, even obstinacy, which was so distinctive and so central a quality of his music-making. Those great performances were surely conjured not at all from the intellect but through his indomitable will, a will usually locked in combat with the terrifying ups and downs - so well described in the book - of Klemperer's manic-depressive disposition. Pre-eminently, he was a man of instinct and feeling; an intellectual would have sought to explain and justify his diverse performing practice, his somewhat irrational preferences in the music of his own time. His was the supreme daemonic attainment of transmitting powerful feelings through music while having the audience believe that it was an irreproachably intellectual and moral experience that was on offer.

Until the mid-1920s Klemperer generally followed Mahler's practice of retouching wherever the score failed to satisfy his own, composer's ear. In the late 1920s and 1930s he became much more *Werkreue*, while in his final period he again adopted a more empirical approach. Klemperer's attitudes to the score were constant only in the assumption that he knew what it was that the composer wanted to say - maybe not an uncommon attitude among conductors, but hard to account for in someone who strove so hard to be the music's servant rather than its master. Perhaps that is just the point, Klemperer regarding the composer, like the conductor, as an imperfect vessel through which the music had to pass.

As Klemperer was himself a prolific composer, particularly in his manic phases, he was in a position to know. His compositions include songs, choral works (many testifying to his profoundly religious nature: he converted from Judaism to the Catholic faith in 1919), incidental music for *Faust* and the *Orestia*, and at least three operas. But although Heyworth cites the divided reactions to performances of these works (usually under the composer himself), ranging from dismissal through evasion, to acclaim, he is reticent about his own views. We know that Klemperer took his compositions seriously - which in a musician of his rank is of more than passing interest - but performing them brought out the more idiosyncratic aspects of his musical persona.

Ferdinand Pföhl, reporting a recital in 1915 when a well-known singer was accompanied by Klemperer in a programme whose second half consisted of nine of his songs, complained that the composer-pianist "imposed his tyrannical will, indicating bar lines and entries by stamping his foot or an imperious nod of his head, relentlessly insisting on an idiosyncratic sense of rhythm, without for a moment allowing the voice a right to its own development or self-enjoyment. . . . It is very much to be hoped that in his impatiently awaited second volume Mr Heyworth will tell us more about Klemperer the composer, not least about that *Heige* setting where, again according to Pföhl, "the whole piece is built on a . . . repeated note, which suggests a man knocking on the lid of his own coffin".

As they are spoke

David Coward

GEORGETTE A. MARKS and CHARLES B. JOHNSON
Harrap's Slang Dictionary: English-French/
French-English
Revised and edited by Jane Pratt
401pp + 476pp. Harrap. £9.85.
0245 540474

Dictionaries are not what they used to be. There was a time when a word did not exist until validated by an approved lexicon. Nowadays, the dictionaries follow the living language and usage is king. The normative and the prescriptive have been largely abandoned in favour of data-gathering, and the lexicographer poses more as an honest broker than as the mouthpiece of established taste and authority.

In the 1970s, Georgette A. Marks and Charles B. Johnson introduced their *Dictionary of Slang and Colloquialisms* like stern anthropologists and defied the reader to be squeamish. Jane Pratt opens the proceedings with the hint of a wink and invites our connivance. The dropping of "Colloquialisms" from the title further seems to suggest that the emphasis has shifted from the needs of those who travel and have an interest in books, plays and films towards those who aspire to be streetwise. It is an unfortunate impression, for, as wordfests go, this is a slambang of discreet authority.

It offers an "entertaining selection of the more light-hearted and racy aspects" of both languages, and an opportunity for "greater access to the daily languages of English and French speaking cultures". In fact, much of it makes grim reading and the cultures in question may seem at times to reflect more the current yuppy (N Am, unlisted here) fascination with the language of sex, drugs and violence than the daily lives of its potential readers. It is in these three areas in particular that the cant element in slang is seen to be alive and extremely well. The average promiscuous junkie in bover boots, living in a spangled world of linguistic invention, speaks a language as closed and foreign as Ronyon or computerese. His speech is aggressive rather than good-natured. It is the cultivation of the flip,

the smart put-down, of the dismissive and contemptuous gloss. It is a world away from the *coves*, *gaspers* and *silly sausages*, or the *mégots*, *raseurs* and *moches* (all listed here) of the near-standard mainstream. The trend seems set to continue. As traditional avocations decline it is only to be expected that alienated youth should prove to be the most prolific and inventive generators of the new slang.

Sociologists will draw conclusions from the fact that we have fewer words for parts of the body than the French, far more for drug use and abuse, and about the same number for violence and sex. But Joe Public had better tread warily before trying to amaze his friends abroad. Slang is the last bastion of language to fall to the foreigner, and in the commendable intention of providing a readable text, the editor has been mean with her guidance. Context-indicators like *typo*, *scol* and *naut* do not figure in the list of abbreviations, which defines rhyming slang for French readers but not the distinctive *verlan* (cromi/micro, Subibus, zarbil bizarre) which must be sought under its headword. The classifications F (Familiar), P (Popular) and V (Vulgar) are useful but, even though such areas are notoriously subjective, could have done with being defined more clearly. VV is used sparingly and sometimes puzzlingly: *hair-pie* (sic), *hamburger*, and *fur-pie* rate a V but *furburger* gets a VV. No guidance at all is provided in the Roget-like indexes of English and French synonyms. (Marks and Johnson spoke more cautiously of "termes analogues" and "near-synonyms" and the reader was warned.) But the revised indexes remain useful as a means of transferring from the world of standard speech to the codes and jargons revealed in some 20,000 headwords.

But if the formal directions for use are meagre, the clarity is where it should be - in the definitions and equivalents which for the most part strike just the right note of relaxed familiarity. Thus "to have sex" replaces "to have coition", standard with Marks and Johnson, while a word like *se carapater* (formerly "to decamp") is neatly rendered as "to run away, skedaddle, split, make a quick exit, make tracks". Sensitive to trends and fashions, carefully revised and updated, and attractively set out, the new Harrap makes up in precision and exuberance what it - inevitably - lacks in charm.

Legends for living by

P. L. Dickinson

L. G. PINE
A Dictionary of Mottos
303pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £9.95.
07100 9339 X

Leading an assault on Montevideo in February 1807, Lieutenant-Colonel Spencer Vassall exhorted his men with the memorable words "Every bullet has its billet". "Scarcely had he spoken", C. N. Elvin's *Handbook of Mottos* (1860) records, "when a bullet struck and killed him. His family in consequence assumed the sentence for their motto." Many mottos are as alliterative but there can be few as poignant.

Sadly, it is not included in L. G. Pine's new book, the first major listing of mottos since Elvin's. The publishers vaunt it as "the most complete dictionary of mottos ever assembled" - a fairly safe claim given the lack of competition - and it therefore seems surprising that so many of the mottos listed by Elvin should have been jettisoned by Pine. Pine follows Elvin's format - an alphabetical listing of mottos, with translations where necessary (mostly from Latin) and occasional historical notes. Pine provides a nominal index, something found only in the 1971 reprinting of Elvin.

There is no denying that Pine has gathered together a greater number of mottos than his Victorian predecessor - well over 6,000. Elvin inevitably concentrated on family mottos whereas Pine is able to list many corporate bodies whose existence would have been unimaginable in 1860, such as the BBC (*Nation shall speak peace unto nation*) and the Atomic Energy Authority (*E minimis maximis*).

The mottoes of about 1,000 RAF units have been included, and the space and effort devoted to them seem thoroughly disproportionate. Regimental mottoes, though admittedly thinner on the ground, are given short shrift. Many of the regiments listed are now either defunct or amalgamated.

His anachronistic approach is even more glaring in the treatment of local authorities. The mottoes of pre-1974 counties, boroughs, UDCs and RDCs abound but Pine has made no attempt whatsoever to catalogue the often different mottoes used by the new councils. In some cases, by ignoring recent changes, he gives entirely the wrong mottoes. It is of course historically valuable to record the mottoes of defunct councils and regiments but it is preposterous to regard modern usage as completely. Pine has depended too heavily on out-of-date secondary sources.

There are other surprising omissions. Horatio Nelson's well-known motto *Palmam qui meruit ferat* appears but, quite apart from *Palmam* being misprinted as *Palman*, it is listed for families of Laking and Remnant and for HMS Nelson - but not for the Nelson family. Many life peers whose mottoes are given in *Deben's Peerage* (1980) are ignored - Lords Weidenfeld, Wigdery and Wigdery to name but three. (It seems a shame, too, not to find Harold Wilson's inspired adoption of the Clockmakers' Company motto (*Tempus rerum imperator*) or Harry Scowbe's nicely ambiguous *Go on*.)

The book is pleasantly printed and well indexed. It can be regarded as a useful supplement to Elvin's work. Curiously enough, no motto is listed for the Pine family. If the author ever undertakes a revision, he would do well to espouse the simple motto used by Lord Kitchener and also (we now know) by the Electrical and Wireless School of the RAF. *Thorough*.

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The irreproachable daemon

Patrick Carnegie

PETER HEYWORTH
Otto Klemperer: His life and times
Volume 1: 1885-1933
492pp. Cambridge University Press. £15.
0521 242932

Otto Klemperer's conducting career began in the Mahler era and continued until the late 1960s when, though partially paralysed, he inspired London audiences with his Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms and Mahler. But although Klemperer had always conducted the classics, the great years of farewell offered only glimpses of the turbulent achievements that had gone before.

Klemperer was a musician who did not waste words. As Peter Heyworth remarks at the outset of this first volume of his biography, its subject might have raised an ironic eyebrow at its length. But in truth, no aspect of this indefatigably researched and finely written book needs apology, least of all its length. For Klemperer's was a life that cannot properly be unfolded without a thorough understanding of its complex background. In supplying that, Mr Heyworth makes a major contribution to the history of European musical life in the first thirty years of the century.

When the young Klemperer emerged from his musical studies he was regarded as a promising pianist, but from the moment in 1905 when he conducted the off-stage band for Mahler's Second Symphony in the composer's presence, his path was set. Mahler's personal recommendation, scrawled on a visiting card, secured him a junior conducting job at Angelo Neumann's German Theatre in Prague. It was a frustrating, operetta-ridden apprenticeship, from which he was rescued in 1910 when a second commendation from Mahler, this time in a telegram from New York, "Klemperer zugreifen" ("Grab Klemperer"), won him an assistant conductorship at Hamburg, his home town. He made his debut there with *Lohengrin* and electrified the critics: Two years later he was given two-and-a-half weeks to prepare his first Ring cycle. It is no wonder that the pressures imposed by the repertory system nearly made him give up: at one point he wrote to a bookseller in Prague asking if he'd take him on.

Among the many testimonies from this period cited by Heyworth, none rings truer than that of Lotte Lehmann, whom Klemperer was coaching as Elso:

Klemperer sat at the piano like an evil spirit, thumping on it with long hands like a tiger's claws, and dragging my terrified voice into the vortex of his fanatical will. . . . [Klemperer] belonged to the category of conductors who made one tremble, yet one was blissful when he was content. . . . Toscanini made one do things because it hurt him if one didn't. Klemperer one obeyed with gritted teeth. . . . He was always a terrible demon. . . . one was hypnotized.

From Hamburg he moved to Strasbourg in 1914 as deputy musical director under his old teacher Hans Pfitzner. Although he is now somewhat disregarded, Pfitzner was a central figure in his day, and Heyworth brings him sharply into focus. Pfitzner commanded Klemperer's respect not least because of his total identification with what he was conducting. When, during the second act of *Die Meistersinger*, it was evident that the Beckmesser was too ill to continue, Pfitzner handed over the baton to an assistant, had himself shaved and made up, then went on stage to play the role in the final act. Pfitzner's passionate belief in *Werkreue* (fidelity to the work) exercised a lasting influence on Klemperer.

Klemperer's first job as full musical director was at Cologne (1917-24), a post not wholly congenial to a man of his temperament and inclinations, for there "opera was popular precisely because it so rarely provoked thought". Pfitzner's *Reinhold*, the *Intendant*, had no comprehension of *Werkreue*, believing that it was the producer's function to decorate the action with business. Klemperer did as much as anyone could have done to counter this attitude. He put on Busoni's *Tristram and Isolde*, and it was at least partly under his influence that he reacted against the "upholstered orchestral textures" which had been typical of pre-First World War performances, including his own, and which were still the style of conductors like

Bruno Walter, Kleiber and Furtwängler. Klemperer saw the point of Busoni's anti-Wagnerian stance and his belief that *Junge Klassizität* (rejuvenated classicism) was the right path out of the late-Romantic impasse. "Wenn Wagner mir gefällt, gefalle ich mich nicht", he remarked in 1917 ("When I'm into Wagner, I'm out with myself"). After he left Cologne, at the age of thirty-nine, he never conducted *The Ring* again.

The world that dawned in 1918 was, Klemperer said, one "in opposition to Wagner". The immense changes that took place at the end of the war were closely mirrored in Klemperer's person and career, and are charted skilfully by Heyworth. Klemperer emerged with one foot in the late-Romantic world of Mahler, Pfitzner, Schreker, Zemlin-sky; and the other in the brave new worlds of Busoni, Janáček, Stravinsky, Klenek, Hindemith and Weill. After the war, music could no longer mean "German music".

In May 1922 he introduced *Petrushka* in a double bill with the first performance of Zemlin-sky's *Der Zwerg*. Although, predictably enough, *Petrushka* was derided by the chauvinists as "wry and dehumanized", "a silly pantomime", "the work of a Dadaist", and so on, Richard Strauss and a number of others were enthusiastic. This was the beginning for Klemperer of a long association with Stravinsky's music. It was an association that, strangely enough, did not include conducting *The Rite of Spring*, apparently because he protested that he couldn't beat its irregular metres.

In 1921 he chose an all-Schoenberg programme for his Berlin conducting debut, but he was soon in retreat from the expressionist aesthetic to which those works of Schoenberg which he admired belonged, and he made no secret of his dislike of the new dodecaphonic idiom. A month later he returned to Berlin for a performance of Mahler's Second Symphony which became a corner-stone of his reputation as a Mahlerian. "Sobriety and ecstasy are the poles of his conducting", reported Walter Hirschberg. "He has the ability to sink himself in a work so as to convey its innermost core, to place formidable competence and composure at the service of emotion, so that intellect and emotion become one. . . . Although his gestures on the podium were still extravagant, it was not only the New York critic Lawrence Gilman who observed (1924) that the histrionics were no longer the whole man but were a mask concealing disciplined sobriety, an almost puritanical severity."

He hovers over his orchestra like some fabulous, gigantic bird-man, menacing and inescapable. He grows audibly at his men, and once at yesterday's performance he almost roared. . . . But these are external things. In Mr Klemperer's projection of the music we found nothing of the melodramatic, nothing of the sensational.

There were triumphant visits not only to America but also to the Soviet Union. In Germany he was now in some danger of annoying both the powerful lobby of aggrieved Weimar conservatives (who found his interpretations over-analytical and intellectual), and supporters of Busoni's new classicism, who accused Klemperer of backsliding because he still performed the late-Romantic masterpieces.

From Cologne, Klemperer moved in 1924 to Wiesbaden, where he was to spend three of the happiest years of his life. But it was the call to Berlin for which he was waiting, and this came in 1926 when Leo Kestenberg, the principal figure behind the musical life of the young Weimar Republic, offered him the directorship of Berlin's second opera house, the recently reopened Staatsoper am Platz der Republik, adjacent to the Reichstag, and known as the Kroll Opera. Kestenberg's somewhat confused aim was that it should be both a wing of the Volksbühne (providing opera for a broad public) and a workshop for operatic renewal.

Klemperer's achievements at the Kroll are one of the most inspiring chapters in the story of how opera at last shrugged off moribund nineteenth-century performing practice and became a living art. Repertoire classics were given performances which repudiated the Wilhelmian ostentation almost universally aimed at in the old court theatres. Klemperer could now fulfil Mahler's old ambition of being not just the conductor but "the guiding stage-artist of the opera". One of the greatest hits at the Kroll was a production of the original one-

act version of *The Flying Dutchman*. The work was drastically demythologized, the Dutchman being stripped of his beard and Senta's companions set not to spin but to make fishing nets. T. W. Adorno observed that the Kroll had "mobilized a reserve of actuality in Wagner . . . which will explode today or tomorrow" - as it did nearly fifty years later in Patrice Chéreau's Bayreuth production of the *Ring* in 1976.

The many modern works given at the Kroll included Hindemith's *Cardillac* and *Hin und Zurück*, Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, *Mavra*, *Petrushka* and *The Soldier's Tale*, five works by Klenek, Schoenberg's *Erwartung* and *Die glückliche Hand*, Weill's *Jasager*, Janáček's *From the House of the Dead* and Debussy's *Joux*. Klemperer took on nothing lightly (he rebutted attempts to pin a "modernist" label



on him) and projects sometimes floundered. He backed Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (he took moral exception to the brothel scene), and out of Schoenberg's *Von Heute auf Morgen*, *Wozzeck* would have seemed a natural for the Kroll, but Klemperer never conducted it, nor was Berg's orchestral music ever played at the Kroll concerts.

All told, the repertoire was not the kind one would naturally associate with a theatre supposedly dedicated to the operatic education of the common man. The incongruity between Klemperer's aims and those of the Volksbühne was an instrumental factor leading to the Kroll's closure in 1931 (a disgraceful piece of cultural politics, expertly untangled by Heyworth). Kestenberg's faith in "the oneness of socialism and music" was itself part of the problem. For if he didn't exactly believe that the *Volks* must love the highest *Bühne* when they saw it, he did believe that education would get them there in the end. But the middle-brow Kroll clientele had little interest in difficult modern works, wanting only *Carmen*, *Aida*, and the other staple fare of the wealthy bourgeoisie. The audience, said Klemperer, had expected "big singers, big arias, big applause".

Although Klemperer fought hard to save the Kroll, he found himself caught in a revolution which went beyond his own, primarily musical, aims. He clashed with his dramaturge, Hans Curiel, over the latter's choice of designers like Moholy-Nagy and Schlemmer. It was one thing that the stage should be purged of stage business and decoration, quite another that Bauhaus constructivism should take its place.

When the Kroll closed, Klemperer joined Leo Blech and Erich Kleiber as one of the three principal conductors at the Linden Opera. But this was unsatisfactory from every one's point of view. Klemperer regarded the repertory conditions there as inimical to the principles on which he had based his professional life. Meantime the Nazis were moving swiftly to power, though Klemperer seemed not to sense the danger. On April 1, 1933 he read Roger Sessions's prose-poem he had written in praise of the New Order in Germany. The next day he informed his orthodox brother-in-law that the "Jewish question was basically a religious one, suggesting that a Jew-

ish palatine guard should be formed to protect Hitler. Assuming this was not a Klemperer Wit, Heyworth is surely right in hazarding that such notions were at least partly sparked by Klemperer's belief that the Weimar authorities had betrayed the Kroll. On April 3 he finally woke up and was persuaded to flee to Switzerland. There could have been no more ironic afterword to the Kroll experiment than that in 1933 its building became the new home of the Reichstag. Looking back years later, Klemperer felt that his subsequent career (from with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, then with the Budapest Opera and finally in London) was an anticlimax.

Heyworth's superb documentation of Klemperer's first fifty-two years reveals a complex, and often paradoxical, relationship between the conductor's personality, his achievements and the legend that has sprung from both. Some adjustment is now needed to Klemperer's reputation as mighty musical intellect, as a magus with irrefutable insight into the works he played. In the German-speaking world, and even beyond it, his image is that of a torch-bearer of moral truth and through music, a conductor with an "uncanny ability to convey the idea as well as the sound".

Yet one also recalls the wilfulness, even obstinacy, which was so distinctive and so central a quality of his music-making. Those great performances were surely conjured not at all from the intellect but through his indomitable will, a will usually locked in combat with the terrifying ups and downs - so well described in the book - of Klemperer's manic-depressive disposition. Pre-eminently, he was a man of instinct and feeling: an intellectual would have sought to explain and justify his diverse performing practice, his somewhat irrational preferences in the music of his own time. His was the supreme daemonic attainment of transmitting powerful feelings through music while having the audience believe that it was an irreproachably intellectual and moral experience that was on offer.

Until the mid-1920s Klemperer generally followed Mahler's practice of retouching wherever the score failed to satisfy his own, composer's ear. In the late 1920s and 1930s he became much more *Werkreue*, while in his final period he again adopted a more empirical approach. Klemperer's attitudes to the score were constant only in the assumption that he knew what it was that the composer wanted to say - maybe not an uncommon attitude among conductors, but hard to account for in someone who strove so hard to be the music's servant rather than its master. Perhaps that is just the point, Klemperer regarding the composer, like the conductor, as an imperfect vessel through which the music had to pass.

As Klemperer was himself a prolific composer, particularly in his manic phases, he was in a position to know. His compositions include songs, choral works (many testifying to his profoundly religious nature: he converted from Judaism to the Catholic faith in 1919), incidental music for *Faust* and the *Orestia*, and at least three operas. But although Heyworth cites the divided reactions to performances of these works (usually under the composer himself), ranging from dismissal through evasion, to acclaim, he is reticent about his own views. We know that Klemperer took his compositions seriously - which in a musician of his rank is of more than passing interest - but performing them brought out the more idiosyncratic aspects of his musical persona.

Ferdinand Pfohl, reporting a recital in 1915 when a well-known singer was accompanied by Klemperer in a programme whose second half consisted of nine of his songs, complained that the composer-pianist "imposed his tyrannical will, indicating bar lines and entries by stamping his foot or an imperious nod of his head, relentlessly insisting on an idiosyncratic sense of rhythm, without for a moment allowing the voice a right to its own development or self-enjoyment. . . . It is very much to be hoped that in his impatiently awaited second volume Mr Heyworth will tell us more about Klemperer the composer, not least about that *Faust* setting where, again according to Pfohl, "the whole piece is built on a . . . repeated note, which suggests a man knocking on the lid of his own coffin".

As they are spoke

David Coward

GEORGETTE A. MARKS and CHARLES B. JOHNSON
Harrap's Slang Dictionary: English-French/
French-English
Revised and edited by Jane Pratt
401pp + 476pp. Harrap. £9.85.
0245 540474

Dictionaries are not what they used to be. There was a time when a word did not exist until validated by an approved lexicon. Nowadays, the dictionaries follow the living language and usage is king. The normative and the prescriptive have been largely abandoned in favour of data-gathering, and the lexicographer poses more as an honest broker than as the mouthpiece of established taste and authority.

In the 1970s, Georgette A. Marks and Charles B. Johnson introduced their *Dictionary of Slang and Colloquialisms* like stern anthropologists and defied the reader to be squeamish. Jane Pratt opens the proceedings with the hint of a wink and invites our connivance. The dropping of "Colloquialisms" from the title further seems to suggest that the emphasis has shifted from the needs of those who travel and have an interest in books, plays and films towards those who aspire to be street-wise. It is an unfortunate impression, for, as wordfests go, this is a slangbang of discreet authority.

It offers an "entertaining selection of the more light-hearted and racy aspects" of both languages, and an opportunity for "greater access to the daily languages of English and French speaking cultures". In fact, much of it makes grim reading and the cultures in question may seem at times to reflect more the current yuppy (N Am, unlisted here) fascination with the language of sex, drugs and violence than the daily lives of its potential readers. It is in these three areas in particular that the cant element in slang is seen to be alive and extremely well. The average promiscuous junkie in boover boots, living in a spangled world of linguistic invention, speaks a language as closed and foreign as Romany or computerese. His speech is aggressive rather than good-natured. It is the cultivation of the flip,

the smart put-down, of the dismissive and contemptuous gloss. It is a world away from the *coves*, *gaspers* and *silly sausages*, or the *mégots*, *raseurs* and *moches* (all listed here) of the near-standard mainstream. The trend seems set to continue. As traditional avocations decline it is only to be expected that alienated youth should prove to be the most prolific and inventive generators of the new slang.

Sociologists will draw conclusions from the fact that we have fewer words for parts of the body than the French, far more for drug use and abuse, and about the same number for violence and sex. But Joe Public had better tread warily before trying to amaze his friends abroad. Slang is the last bastion of language to fall to the foreigner, and in the commendable intention of providing a readable text, the editor has been mean with her guidance. Context-indicators like *typo*, *scol* and *haut* do not figure in the list of abbreviations, which defines rhyming slang for French readers but not the distinctive *verlan* (cromi/micro, Subibus, zarbil bizarre) which must be sought under its headword. The classifications F (Familiar), P (Popular) and V (Vulgar) are useful but, even though such areas are notoriously subjective, could have done with being defined more clearly. VV is used sparingly and sometimes puzzlingly: *hair-pie* (sic), *hairburger*, and *fur-pie* rate a V but *furburger* gets a VV. No guidance at all is provided in the Roget-like indexes of English and French synonyms. (Marks and Johnson spoke more cautiously of "termes analogues" and "near-synonyms" and the reader was warned.) But the revised indexes remain useful as a means of transferring from the world of standard speech to the codes and jargons revealed in some 20,000 headwords.

But if the formal directions for use are meagre, the clarity is where it should be - in the definitions and equivalents which for the most part strike just the right note of relaxed familiarity. Thus "to have sex" replaces "to have coition", standard with Marks and Johnson, while a word like *se carapater* (formerly "to decamp") is neatly rendered as "to run away, skedaddle, split, make a quick exit, make tracks". Sensitive to trends and fashions, carefully revised and updated, and attractively set out, the new Harrap makes up in precision and exuberance what it - inevitably - lacks in charm.

Legends for living by

P. L. Dickinson

L. G. PINE
A Dictionary of Mottos
303pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £9.95.
07100 9339 X

Leading an assault on Montevideo in February 1807, Lieutenant-Colonel Spencer Vassall exhorted his men with the memorable words "Every bullet has its billet". "Scarcely had he spoken", C. N. Elvin's *Handbook of Mottos* (1860) records, "when a bullet struck and killed him. His family in consequence assumed the sentence for their motto." Many mottos are as alliterative but there can be few as poignant.

Sadly, it is not included in L. G. Pine's new book, the first major listing of mottos since Elvin's. The publishers vaunt it as "the most complete dictionary of mottos ever assembled" - a fairly safe claim given the lack of competition - and it therefore seems surprising that so many of the mottos listed by Elvin should have been jettisoned by Pine. Pine follows Elvin's format - an alphabetical listing of mottos, with translations where necessary (mostly from Latin) and occasional historical notes. Pine provides a nominal index, something found only in the 1971 reprinting of Elvin.

There is no denying that Pine has gathered together a greater number of mottos than his Victorian predecessor - well over 6,000. Elvin, inevitably concentrated on family mottos whereas Pine is able to list many corporate bodies whose existence would have been unimaginable in 1860, such as the BBC (*Nation shall speak peace unto nation*) and the Atomic Energy Authority (*E minimis maxima*).

The mottoes of about 1,000 RAF units have been included, and the space and effort devoted to them seem thoroughly disproportionate. Regimental mottoes, though admittedly thinner on the ground, are given short shrift. Many of the regiments listed are now either defunct or amalgamated.

His anachronistic approach is even more glaring in the treatment of local authorities. The mottoes of pre-1974 counties, boroughs, UDCs and RDCs abound but Pine has made no attempt whatsoever to catalogue the often different mottoes used by the new councils. In some cases, by ignoring recent changes, he gives entirely the wrong mottoes. It is of course historically valuable to record the mottoes of defunct councils and regiments but it is preposterous to disregard modern usage so completely. Pine has depended too heavily on out-of-date secondary sources.

There are other surprising omissions. Horatio Nelson's well-known motto *Palman qui meruit ferat* appears but, quite apart from *Palman* being misprinted as *Palman*, it is listed for families of Laking and Remnant and for HMS Nelson - but not for the Nelson family. Many life peers whose mottoes are given in *Debrett's Peerage* (1980) are ignored - Lords Weidenfeld, Widgery and Wigoder to name but three. It seems a shame, too, not to find Harold Wilson's inspired adoption of the Clockmakers' Company motto (*Tempus rerum imperat*) or Harry Secombe's nicely ambiguous *Go on*.

The book is pleasantly printed and well indexed. It can be regarded as a useful supplement to Elvin's work. Curiously enough, no motto is listed for the Pine family. If the author ever undertakes a revision, he would do well to espouse the simple motto used by Lord Kitchen and also (we now know) by the Electrical and Wireless School of the RAF: *Thorough*.

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Valerie Pearl

BEN WEINREB and CHRISTOPHER HIBBERT
(Editors)
The London Encyclopaedia
1,029pp. Macmillan. £24.
0333 300246

In view of the size of Christopher Hibbert's and Ben Weinreb's *London Encyclopaedia* and the claims of its publishers it would be good to say that here at last was the authoritative work of scholarship that would give us London adorned with guidebook trivia, the successor to the host of interpreters who have followed Peter Cunningham's influential and pioneering *Handbook of London* of 1849 and a work based on it, H.B. Wheatley's *London Past and Present* of 1891. Unfortunately, the lure of the bizarre, the fanciful and the trivial has not been resisted and alongside some good and serious contributions, chiefly of thematic articles, there are many oddities of an old-fashioned kind. The book must be given full marks for its topicality, however. It contains details of events which occurred in 1883. Its size, too, is impressive. It has 1,029 pages, contains some 5,000 entries and includes a general index of over 10,000 references, a name index of 8,000 persons and reproductions of over 500 drawings, prints and photographs. But as one picks one's way through this enormous accumulation of information about London (for which over 160 contributors are named but not individually identified with their contributions) doubts begin to grow about the nature of the encyclopaedia. Is it entirely the scholarly work claimed by the publishers – of "lasting value to students and historians" – or is it much more, as the publishers also assert: "an endless source of information and anecdote"?

Alas, it is difficult to maintain both propositions at the same time and the book hardly manages to do so successfully. Anecdote often

crowds out important historical information as Clio frequently abandons the stage to Thalia. The Muse of Comedy helps to make the book a pleasant read, no mean task for an encyclopaedia, but she hardly increases our understanding. A few instances randomly trawled will suffice. For Hyde Park Gate, among lists of residents, we are reminded that Enid Bagnold was seduced by Frank Harris under a table in a private room at the Café Royal; in 1936, a gold telephone to mark the one millionth set made was presented to the Mansion House; at Rule's Restaurant a special door was made so that the Prince of Wales and Mrs Langtry could make their frequent visits unobserved; a fire at Clapham Junction in 1909 cooked the meat in a butcher's shop across the road; Barclay's Bank in Piccadilly may be decorated in Venetian Red paint twenty-six coats thick; three women were assaulted by a party of Welsh teetotallers at the Great Exhibition; and it is disclosed that there is no etymological connection between the name of Thomas Crapper and the ceramic water-closets on which he seated the Victorians.

Fortunately, there are some good contributions which live up to the scholarly claims of the book, such as those on various forms of street activities, the Thames, the Tower, crime, transport, police and the government of the city. They are indications of what might have been achieved with better editing and a more uniformly high level of scholarship. As it is there are faults of unnecessary repetition when items having closely related themes are given separate but adjacent entries; there is too much irrelevant matter, as in a discussion whether the Sovereign is also the Duke of Lancaster; and there is much unevenness and lack of balance, the Museum of Unconveniences, for example, being given less space than the local museum at Walthamstow, both being eclipsed

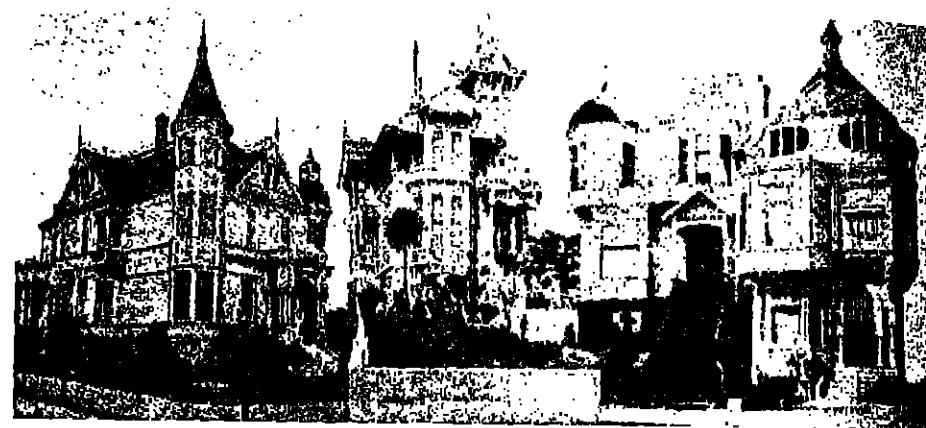
For the Tsarry-eyed

Kyril FitzLyon

LAURENCE KELLY (Editor)
Moscow: A Traveller's Companion
328pp. Constable. £9.95 (paperback, £5.95).
009-464750 X

Having produced a highly enjoyable *Traveller's Companion* for pre-revolutionary St Petersburg, Laurence Kelly has now turned to pre-revolutionary Moscow. Contrary to what usually occurs when the same recipe is applied twice, the result is as good the second time as it was the first. The recipe consists of selecting passages from history books, novels, eyewitness accounts, memoirs, letters, even poems, dealing with events, customs or characters linked with some particular district, street, square, building or set of buildings, and letting their authors speak. Moscow becomes (as does St Petersburg under the same treatment) peopled in the reader's or tourist's imagination by shades of the past which help him to enjoy the present. The editor limits his own comments to introducing the author of each excerpt in the briefest possible manner.

This discretion is welcome in a work of this kind, but it can be excessive and thus defeat the Companion's purpose. It is amusing to read Captain Frankland's account of his dinner with Pushkin in Moscow's select English Club ("so called because hardly any Englishman belongs to it") – a dinner for which poor Frankland had to play as Pushkin disappeared immediately after it – but it is a pity that Kelly does not identify the Club with the hospital it became shortly afterwards and still is. The tourist passing its vast portico – the longest in Moscow – would, therefore, fail to be reminded of this little episode. Similarly, a foreign visitor to the GUM department store would miss its connection with the erstwhile Rydki, the Moscow bazaar so colourfully described in an excerpt by that indefatigable nineteenth-century German traveller, Johann Kohl, since there is no indication that the two institutions are one and the same, even though the present one is drabber and rather more poorly stocked. The tourist contemplating the Lenin Hills is not likely to be reminded of Horace and the way he made there to dedicate his life to a struggle



"Chaos Avenue: An architect's nightmare", reproduced from On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century by Richard Longstrech (455pp. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, distributed in the UK by International Book Distributors. £36. 0 262 12100 X).

by the account of the home of a recent notorious London murderer. Among errors and misprints I noticed are Joseph Harrison for Hansom; Carlton Gardens confused with Carlton House Terrace in one place; the first illumination by gas given as 1805 (correctly elsewhere as 1807); the General Strike run from the Congregational Memorial Hall; Cobbett living in Kensington in 1838 (he died in 1835); a map on page 277 described as "part of Agas's 16th century map" (it is a copperplate engraving, one of two sections which survive, as is properly ascribed on page 495); Charles I given a standing army; the New River undertaking supplying the city with its "first domestic water supply"; John Linnell living at Wyles Farm instead of Wyldes, and County Hall instead of Conway Hall housing the South Place Ethical Society; a compressed account of the Corn Exchange misleadingly suggests that the buffer stocks of corn supplied in 1521 and later by the Corporation and the livery companies against times of dearth meant that there was no private

trade in the supply of corn.

In such a large enterprise anyone may find his favourite bit of London lore left out. It is fair to say, however, that the editors have plainly tried to be as all-embracing as possible, including rugby and association football clubs, statues and memorials, livery companies and even shops and firms. They have adopted the useful device of printing in black letter the names of buildings and institutions which have disappeared and they have flung their net to the farthest limits of Greater London, going beyond it in places. It is a pity, though, that there are no maps except for a Victorian balloonist's view reproduced as an endpaper and the copperplate engraving already mentioned. Also missing or very incomplete are discussions of many of the old theatres, music-halls, penny entertainments, coffee and minor political clubs, debating societies, working men's associations and the many other manifestations of popular culture which once flourished in London.

against autocracy, since the quotation from Herzen's *Memoirs* refers to the place as the Sparrow Hills, the name it bore until 1935.

More examples could be given of the Companion's failure to connect the old names with the new and enable the tourist to identify the new with the old. Not all names have been changed, however (even though many, perhaps most, of them have), and the excerpts are in many cases enjoyable in themselves. I would have preferred less emphasis on tortures, killings, lynchings, brutalities and bestialities of various kinds (were the Russians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries really so much more bloodthirsty than West Europeans, or is this the effect of editorial selection?). I greatly prefer such eyewitness accounts as Sir Jerome Horsey's, the Russia Company Agent in Queen Elizabeth's reign, residing in Moscow. Only a few days before Ivan the Terrible's death Horsey was taken by the Tsar himself to the Royal Treasury in the Kremlin, where his mortally sick host displayed his jewels to him with a suitable comment on each. A diamond, he said, showing him one, "restrains furie and luxurie and abstinence and chastitie", while an emerald "is an enemy to uncleannes. Try it: though man and wiff cohabit in lust together, havinge this stone aboute them, yt will burst at the spendinge of natur." The other jewels – rubies, "turcas", "saphiers" – all have equally wondrous powers as the Tsar points them out one by one until, overcome by emotion and sickness, he exclaims: "I faine, carry me away till an other tyme".

Kelly casts his net wide, and some of the descriptions he quotes are tied not to any particular place or building (or even to Moscow), but only to some particular time, and deal with Russian customs, habits and character generally. But since the least attractive of these refer to the seventeenth century, the modern tourist should not get unduly worried. The German seventeenth-century traveller Olearius credits the Russians with being extremely vicious and immoral, but his examples would hardly have occasioned surprise in other countries then (or perhaps even now): drunkenness, swearing, "lusts of the flesh and fornication", including "the vile depravity we call sodomy", and, horror of horrors, mixed bathing in the nude

(saunas). His contemporary, the Revd Samuel Collins, physician to Peter the Great's father, agrees that "the Russians are a People who differ from all other Nations", with particularly outlandish eating habits. "They know not", for instance, "how to eat Pease and Carrels boyld, but eat them shells and all, like Swine." Their idea of music was, he thought, obnoxious and painful: "if you would please a Russian with Musick, Get a consort of Billingsgate Nightingales, which joyn'd with a flight of screech Owls, a nest of Jackdaws, a pack of hungry Wolves, seven Hogs in a windy day, and as many Cats with their Corrialls [partners] and let them sing *Lacrymas* and that will ravish a pair of Russian Luggs better than all the Musick in Italy".

By the nineteenth century the scene was different. Moscow had become the city of Pushkin, of Tolstoy, of Chekhov; of the Arts Theatre and Stanislavsky; of Diaghilev and the Russian Opera; of picture collectors and galleries, and Kelly's *Companion* has a story to tell by or about most of them. But Moscow was still surprisingly rural, even at the end of the nineteenth century, with cows meandering around – "a simple and convenient method for ensuring good and pure and fresh milk to the family", comments an admiring English traveller in the 1870s. The larger houses, he tells us, have cows in their backyards and gardens. In the summer the cows are let out early every morning and wend their way independently through the maze of streets to a city barrier, summoned there by a cowherd's horn. The cowherd then drives them to a pasture outside town, guards them during the day and brings them all back in the evening to the same barrier. There he leaves them to find each its own individual way home to be milked.

Are all these stories true? An irrelevant question, perhaps, as Kelly's guide sets out to be a companion, not a textbook, and while better recommendation can there be for a companion than for him to have a fund of entertaining and amusing anecdotes, regardless of their authenticity?

Kelly is greatly helped by the high quality of the translations from German, French and Russian. In the case of the latter, Sophie Lund's versions are quite outstanding.

Browsing with Boz

Andrew Sanders

NORMAN PAGE
A Dickens Companion
369pp. Macmillan. £20.
0333 315391

There has never exactly been a dearth of Dickens guides, companions, handbooks or dictionaries, style them what you will. The author of this new companion is, however, a trifle sheepish about his predecessors and competitors, declining to praise or assess them. Most of his rivals, he claims in his preface, "have been amateur productions in both the favourable and pejorative senses of that term – labours of love, products of an admirable energy and enthusiasm, but frequently incomplete and not infrequently inaccurate". Norman Page's *Companion* must, alas, be judged by the same criteria, for although he may seek to cast himself in the role of the professional, "in the favourable sense of that term", he presents us with a volume which is both incomplete and frequently inaccurate.

The volume has its merits as a reference book, but they are merits which are restricted. Page provides the reader with useful information about the dates and nature of Dickens's serial publication; he eschews plot-summary and simple critical formulas; and he can, at times, place particular novels in the context of contemporary and modern criticism in a fair and observant way. Page is particularly sensitive to that much abused novel, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, a book which he admits is "the most difficult to approach with an open mind". He is, though, far less sure-footed and tolerant in his sour and dismissive comments on *A Tale of Two Cities*, another abused novel but one equally worthy of a better press. He is also unwilling to come to terms with the fact that nearly all the late novels had unfavourable critical receptions even though they continued to sell well. He notes the mixed reviews given to

Great Expectations but fails to note the devastating dismissal of the story by a journal as eminent as the *Westminster* – "there is not a character or a passage which can afford enjoyment to anybody twenty years hence."

The reasons behind many of Page's somewhat conventional responses lie in his reliance on often conventional biographical and critical secondary sources. When his sources are as rich and informative as Butt and Tiltottson's *Dickens at Work* or Robert L. Patten's *Charles Dickens and his Publishers* all is well, but Page tends to over-rely on Edgar Johnson's *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph* for biographical detail which could well do with some up-dating. He also tends to quote Johnson's gushy, adjectival style rather too much for my comfort.

As one reads through *A Dickens Companion* one's suspicion of it increases. Both the opinions and the selection of information begin to emerge as arbitrary and often unreliable. We are told, for example, that Macdisse's "Nickelby" portrait was used as the frontispiece for the "three-volume" edition of the novel. What three-volume edition? Page also believes that Smike is "mentally subnormal", a diagnosis more reliant on the RSC adaptation of the novel than on Dickens's text. Later he asserts that the manuscript of *The Cricket on the Hearth* is at Austin, Texas, when it is in fact in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, and he lists Duane De Vries's book on Dickens's "Apprentice Years" among the biographies when it is in fact a study of *Sketches by Boz*. When it comes to lists of characters we are told that Mrs Skewton in *Dombey and Son* has a nickname derived from a quotation which is never applied to her (Dickens is quite clear in Chapter XXI as to why she is called "Cleopatra"). The list of characters for the same novel includes the obscure Mrs Blackitt but omits the far less obscure Mrs Wickham; the list for *Little Dorrit* includes Mrs Tickit but leaves out old Nandy. In the *Our Mutual Friend* section the Revd Frank Milvey's name

is misspelt "Milvery", and the error is repeated in the index. Through a typographical slip, which deserved to be corrected, we have Dickens living at "Gud's Hill Palace", and as this is the only mention of his house's full name the innocent reader might end up with the idea that the novelist had considerably inflated ambitions. The topographical sections leave much to be desired, and given the huge range of the subject, might have been better omitted altogether rather than being included with all the sins of omission glaring at the reader (why have Highgate cemetery, Soho, Richmond and St Paul's, but leave out Kensal Green, Green-

wich, Dulwich and Westminster Abbey?) The sections on the letters and translations are minimal and it seems inexcusable that one of Dickens's finest short works, *George Silverman's Explanation*, should not achieve even passing notice.

In his preface, Page puffs his own new reference book by insisting that a range of questions he himself poses could only be easily answered by referring to his own volume. It might be simpler, and cheaper, to consult Forster's *Life* in the 1928 edition by J.W.T. Ley. It comes as no surprise that it is an edition which does not appear in the bibliography.

On microfiche

Microform, with its inexhaustible storage potential, is well suited to publishing works of reference, and the greater the size of the project the more justified is the use of the medium. Chadwyck-Healey's *Catalogue of British Publications Not Published by HMSO* is a good example both of the infinitely expanding nature of certain reference projects and of the medium's ability to contain the vast amounts of information which may be involved. To date, it comprises 17,000 titles issued by over 400 official organizations – quinquages, nationalized industries, research institutes, etc – on subjects ranging from aerospace to VAT. Details of this and other Chadwyck-Healey reference publications (which include *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers and British and Irish Biographies* – consisting of 260 biographical dictionaries) are obtainable from 20 Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8DT.

HMSO has itself made economical use of microfiche as an appendix to the book, *Documents of British Policy Overseas: Series I, Volume I: The Conference at Potsdam 1945*, edited by Rohan Butler and M. E. Pelly (1278pp. £97.20. 0 11 591682 2), by issuing the summary calendars of further related documents on twenty-six microfiches. They are

accompanied by a note which indicates another valuable use of microform publishing: "These reproductions are the best obtainable from sometimes fragile or faint originals." Newspapers and periodicals – always bulky and frequently existing only in a crumbling state – can be stored easily in this medium. Research Publications (PO Box 45, Reading RG1 8HF) has a long list of British and international publications on microfilm (including *The Times*, the *Financial Times* and the *Straits Times*), with indexes for a few of them in book form.

Micro-publishing's tendency towards all-encompassment is often reflected in its titles. Among Harvester Microform's latest projects are *The Complete State Papers Domestic*, series one and two, from 1547 to 1702, and the Micro-filming Corporation of America is publishing *Documentary Sources of Western Civilization*, a triple-segmented project with approximately 400 microfiches in each, the first of which is called "Dawn of Civilization – 1774". The others bring the story up to the Nixon years. Details are available from, respectively, 17 Ship Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 1AD, and 1620 Hawkins Avenue, PO Box 10, Sanford, North Carolina 27330, USA.

J. C.

Catching the continental drift

Christopher Hope

HANS M. ZELL, CAROL BUNDY and VIRGINIA COULON
A New Reader's Guide to African Literature
Second, completely revised and expanded edition
533pp. Heinemann. £25.
0435 919997

In the ten years since the last *Reader's Guide to African Literature* was published, entries have increased from 820 to 3,000. There could be no clearer indication of a lively, expanding literature from Africa, of the growth of local publishers, and of the ever more serious critical attention which African writers receive. Despite this welcome expansion, the editors have been properly selective and the *Guide* is compact, attractively arranged and supplies the inquirer with information quickly and cogently.

Rather less satisfactory is the *Guide*'s description of itself. It is in the first place not a guide to African literature, as the title might suggest, but specifically to black African literature, as the small print makes clear. The notion of "African" is further confined by the fact that the literature referred to is limited to three languages: English, French and Portuguese. No doubt reasons of space dictated this, but new readers judging the *Guide* by its cover may find it rather narrower than they imagined.

Most attractive is its unabashed enthusiasm. Even the little magazines which have been such a feature of South African literary life are remembered and it is good to see vigorous newcomers such as *Staffrider* given their due. On the other hand, the editor of *Contrast* (which appears twice in the *Guide*), in the second instance wearing only its little-known surname, *The South African Literary Journal* could well be alarmed to find that rumours of its death are circulating.

The penal effects of banning, imprisonment and exile upon generations of South African writers are recorded. However, the ability of African writers to infuriate their own govern-

ments is, happily, not confined to South Africa. This is something which might have been more widely welcomed in the biographies of ninety-five important writers (an increase of some fifty on the old *Guide*); for the biographical section is the chief adornment of the *Guide* and an invaluable aid for students, writers and readers of African literature. The biographies, while useful, are marked by a certain discretion; references to political involvement are characterized by a kind of tactical blandness or vagueness. While we learn, for example, that Wole Soyinka left Nigeria for temporary exile, any mention of his relations with the Nigerian government then or now is avoided. The Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o spent a year in prison, yet the reasons for this, or, say, for the refusal to allow his theatre group to perform in Zimbabwe are allowed to remain safely obscure. Indeed it is notable just how many of the writers listed have faced terms of imprisonment or some form of exile, or both.

If a certain reticence characterizes the editors' approach to African politics they show an unrestrained decisiveness in other matters. It is misleading to be told that the Mozambican poet José Craveirinha was born in Maputo in 1922 because in 1922 Maputo was Lourenço Marques. Then, too, since the editors have chosen to make their selection from black African writers only, it comes as something of a surprise to find an entry for Luandino Vieira, a white Angolan. While Vieira is doubtless worthy of inclusion one white face suggests a kind of inverted tokenism.

None the less the editors have produced a valuable source of reference: The new *Guide* contains a very full list of books and authors; a readable bibliography; a selection of literary studies devoted to African literature; a selection of children's books; a compendium of folklore; lists of active publishers, and, most useful, an international directory of libraries holding substantial collections of African literature. There is also a list of current prices and a currency conversion table, which may strike some as a very brave venture indeed.

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RUSSIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATORS DICTIONARY

A Guide to Scientific and Technical Usage, 2nd Edition

by M. Zimmerman

This bilingual dictionary provides up-to-date idiomatic English phrases and expressions encountered in all branches of science and technology. It is the second edition of a book originally published in 1966. The original edition contained some 12,000 word combinations and expressions, and the second edition is a complete revision with almost twice as many entries enhanced by many examples of usage and extensive cross-referencing. In order to assist the translators in producing natural, idiomatic and fluent translation, examples are drawn from the latest English language books and journals. Emphasis is given to the most recent scientific developments, including laser techniques and space research. It provides English speaking users with an unprecedented opportunity to learn Russian technical idioms and is particularly helpful with translating Russian prepositions idiomatically. For example, 202 items begin with the preposition HA, unlike most dictionaries which feature this preposition only once.

April '84
0471 90218 7approx. 448pp
approx. £31.00

READING RUSSIAN FOR THE SCIENTIST AND MATHEMATICIAN

by C.A. Croston, Department of Mathematics, University of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia

This book is intended to enable scientists and mathematicians to produce their own translations of Russian technical literature, which is otherwise slow and expensive to translate. Other scientific Russian grammars tend to assume a dauntingly exhaustive approach which presumes an unrealistically high degree of linguistic commitment and familiarity. These texts generally fail to recognise the scientists' primary objective which is the scientific content rather than the language itself. The present book uses the English language as far as practicable to illustrate grammatical points and to develop a linguistic foundation for the study of Russian. Much scientific terminology is common to both Russian and English, and this and other aspects of the language are exploited throughout the book. Numerous examples are provided as are extended passages of modern scientific literature over a whole range of scientific disciplines. In all cases translations are given, together with detailed commentaries. The book concludes with a very extensive Russian-English vocabulary which makes the text totally self-contained, although dictionary skills are encouraged throughout.

April '84
0471 90260 8approx. 224pp
approx. £17.00

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Enterprise encyclopaedized

Sydney Checkland

DAVID J. JEREMY (Editor)
Dictionary of Business Biography:
 A Biographical Dictionary of Business
 Leaders Active in Britain in the Period 1860-
 1980
 Volume 1, A-C
 878pp. Butterworths. £65.
 0406 27341 3

Here are what the Duke of Edinburgh in his introduction calls "the great wealth creators of modern times", marching alphabetically through the pages, each name accompanied by a business function which designates the core of a life. In a sense this is a parallel venture to the *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, making it possible to place two sets of contending heroes alongside one other. The 250 entries of the present volume (there are four more volumes to come) follow a fairly strict format on the whole (though some contributors follow their own inclinations). There are some names of a numbing obscurity to anyone but the specialist, but most appear for good reason. The mix of business initiatives is extraordinary: there are a perfume manufacturer, a provider of office towels and a greyhound-racing promoter alongside the magnates and mandarins, those operators on the grand scale and advisers to governments in peace and war, including merchant-bankers, gnomes of the heavy industries, ship owners and geniuses of the automobile and aeroplane.

There is much serendipity in the volume, as in many reference books. This is enhanced by the portraits of numerous industrial and commercial phoenixes of Victorian and Edwardian times (so slighted, as a class, by the *Dictionary of National Biography*) as they arise, some-

what stiffly, in their whiskers, broadcloth and gravitas, to salute a generation whose minds are greatly confused concerning them. The whiskers seem to have disappeared about the turn of the century; the new men who performed between the wars and for a time thereafter, when Britain was still a major and respected producer and seller, have short backs and sides, are clean shaven, have fewer watch-chains and seem to want the world to see them in congenial rather than in threatening terms.

These men have largely evaded systematic theory. The classical economists and their successors until fairly recently have looked down on them as being mere responders to market stimuli. They were detested by Marx, for whom they were the essence of the bourgeoisie (though he conceded their necessary historical role), and who saw them as being motivated by the urge to maximize and appropriate surplus value at the expense of the labour force. Attempts at a theory of imperfect competition or of the behaviour of the firm have provided no real grip on such men.

General theory, indeed, becomes more and more difficult as you ascend among the mighty, or at least the notorious. The extraordinary career of Max Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook, is set out, making it hard to understand how certain surviving celebrities of today can hold his memory in such esteem. There is Jabez Balfour, property developer and swindler (he landed up in Parkhurst Prison, where he became acting librarian and organist); John Baring with his immense influence throughout the City but haunted by the near collapse of the house of Baring in his father's day; Thomas Beecham, patent medicine manufacturer and provider of the financial basis for his son's musical career; Henry Bessemer, giant of the age of steel; Jesse Boot, manufacturing and

retail chemist and latter-day pious founder of a university; Sir John Brunner, inadvertently steering the British chemicals industry towards ICI gigantism; Montague Burton with his fifty-fitting suits; Billy Butlin, pioneer of mass organized leisure; George and Laurence Cadbury, the Quaker chocolate kings; Joseph Chamberlain, screw manufacturer and prime minister manqué; Thomas Cook, father of the travel agent business; and the Courtalds, who led the world from natural to man-made fibres.

The successors of these men in the present day should find this *Dictionary* of great interest. Men steeped in business will be able to read between the lines where their predecessors' challenges and responses are set out, especially perhaps those of crisis management or managerial senescence, causing the creditors to bring in the accountants, those increasingly powerful remakers of businesses. Radical critics of capitalism will find here their principal targets, with, however, very little to sustain (or indeed dispel) indictments. It can hardly be denied that the entries, though in a way comprehensive, are not on the whole very penetrating (though each entry is provided with a bibliography in which it will be possible to dig more deeply). There are real problems here: space in such a venture is severely limited and the research effort necessary in order to go further would have been enormous. For example, relations with labour are largely passed over. There are only a few hints as to which of these men were responsible for the confrontational relationships, partly based on a folk memory of grievances, that rule in today's Britain.

Historians, having this gallery under their hands, should be able to make progress in their understanding of the business world. This, indeed, has been a major intention of the *Dic-*

tionary's backers, the Social Science Research Council, of its producers, the Business History Unit of the London School of Economics and Imperial College, under its director, Leslie Hannah, and of its editor, David J. Jeremy. It is described as "the first comprehensive and systematic attempt to place generalizations about British entrepreneurs on a sure foundation of biographical data". In this sense the *Dictionary of Business Biography* is more ambitious than that of *Labour Biography*. The relatively new techniques of prosopography have been applied to the classical world, to revolutionary America, to Georgian politics and to French élites of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the computer age the prosopography of business will involve the creation of a bank of standardized data from which a kind of quantitative sociology of business behaviour will emerge. It may then be possible to see a pattern or patterns in the business past, and to find answers to such questions as, how much hereditary ownership and management was there, and was this helpful or harmful? Can we relate general cultural phenomena such as religion and education to business behaviour? How far was there a loss of business dynamic due to the adoption of gentlemanly, land-owning values? Were these men major consumers as well as producers? Thus, Keynes's picture of the great Victorian cake of capital never to be cut does not seem to fit very well with the country houses, servants and equipages of so many of these men. Even when all this has been done, much will remain obscure, as in the matter of motivation. For in many cases, as W.J. Reader remarks of one of his subjects, "of his driving motives we can only guess". Nevertheless, much may be achieved by the kind of systematic scrutiny of British businessmen of which this *Dictionary* is a beginning.

Illuminating the lesser lights

Victoria Glendinning

ANNE CRAWFORD, TONY HAYTER,
 ANN HUGHES, FRANK PROCHASKA,
 PAULINE STAFFORD and ELIZABETH
 VALLANCE (Editors)
**The Europa Biographical Dictionary of British
 Women: Over 1000 Notable Women from
 1436pp. Europa Publications. £27.50.
 090511877 4**

Biographical dictionaries of women are temporarily necessary, since in the great reference books of the past all but the most regal, saintly, or ultra-famous of females are unrecorded. The *Europa Biographical Dictionary of British Women* has more than 1,000 entries, though it has no *Who's Who* function - only the dead qualify for inclusion. It has been compiled by a team of six editors and eighty contributors - without, it appears, a general editor to impose a style on the whole.

This results in superficial inconsistencies. There is no consensus in this country, as there is not in this book, about how women's names should be handled. No contributors here follow the American custom of calling a woman by her surname only. Some are antiquely formal, as in "Miss Rye hoped that female emigration would elevate the moral tone of the colonies". Others are cosier: "Dorothy was an avid reader, proficient in French and German." That, on Dorothy Osborne, sounds like a school report; while "Ottoline was notorious as the mistress of many famous men" conjures up a frivolous picture of Lady Ottoline Morrell which is positively misleading. The most satisfactory method, though the most long-winded, seems to be to repeat forename and surname at every mention. Some contributors fail to observe in their entry-headings the distinction between, say, *Smith, Lady Mary* and *Smith, Mary Lady*. In a hundred years no one will remember what the difference is between Lady Smith and Lady Mary Smith, but it is an area in which there is still a right and a wrong formulation, and a reference book ought to get it right.

For the earliest period, there is the inevitable flurry of Aethryth and assorted impronounceable abbess-princesses - even Lady Godiva, a little pedantically, is listed under "Godiva". At the other end of their time-scale

the compilers have done well to include women who only qualified for inclusion by dying very recently. The limitation of scope to British women makes possible the inclusion of those once considered consorts or appendages - Henry Fielding's sister, the Coleridge women, poor Mary Lamb, Lady Churchill, Lady Mountbatten. But policy or the problem of space has precluded any major articles or conspicuously longer entries; just Queen Victoria and Emma, a wife of King Canute, get much the same footnote.

This highlights the question of the ways in which this volume is and is not useful. For major figures, the *DNB* or a good encyclopedia is, naturally, infinitely superior. The usefulness of this dictionary is in respect of the lesser lights of the professions, public life and the arts, providing essential biographical and bibliographical notes otherwise unobtainable without time-consuming research in a library.

But the visits to the library will still have to be made. This reference book cannot be trusted on points of detail, as even a cursory survey shows, and it is for points of detail that one turns to books of this kind. The novel by G.B. Stern was not "Young Matrilarch" but *The Matrilarch*; Elizabeth von Arnim's *The Enchanted April* was not set on the French Riviera; the bibliography beneath the entry on Mary Wollstonecraft fails to mention Claire Tomalin's definitive biography of 1978; Letitia Landon - the minor poet "L.E.L." - is given more space than her friend Felicia Hemans, who was quite phenomenally popular in her day; Mrs Hemans did not just have "an odd readership among young ladies", but was seriously admired by Scott, Landor and Wordsworth - as is properly noted in *The Macmillan Dictionary of Women's Biography*, the volume's nearest rival.

But a comparison between the two volumes only shows up the arbitrary nature of each. Of the Mitford clan, only Nancy makes the *Europa*, and only Jessica the *Macmillan*. Both dictionaries carry an entry on Eleanor Marx, but give different dates for the publication of *Eighty Years and After* by Yvonne Kapp. It's not, this time, that one has got it wrong. Neither has got it right. Reference books are the tools of a writer's trade, and if they are unreliable they may be more trouble than they are worth.

The philosophy of bibliography: beyond 1800

Robin Alston

Nineteenth Century Short Title Catalogue:
 Series 1 Phase 1, 1801-1815
 Volume 1, A-C
 547pp. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey for
 Aveo. £875 the set of five volumes.
 0907977 10 3

Enumerative bibliography has aroused passion in its advocates and adversaries alike. For Just (Library Association Conference, 1936) the "dream of bibliography" (a phrase to be associated with the publication of the British Museum *General Catalogue* in publicity of the 1960s) was "in reality a nightmare. Its accomplishment would add to the world's burden, not lighten it, for to record rubbish is only less a crime than to publish it." He went on to suggest that the purpose of bibliography was to "take off the scum". And no doubt many a librarian, contemplating the fate of the mountains of deteriorating "rubbish" in his custody, has wished that scholarship would occur. Against the proponents of "selective bibliography" are those who, like Greg, believe that a "bibliographer has no business to know a bible from a Decameron or a sermon from a fabliau", and that Maunsell put it aptly in 1595 in the preface to his historic catalogue of English books:

And though it be vnperfect, . . . yet he that helpeth me to put in one booke that I have not scene, I hope that I shall shew him ten that he never heard of.

Scholarship thrives on books not heard of, which is one persuasive argument justifying the effort which has been invested by F. J. G. Robinson and G. Averley in attempting to produce a short-title catalogue for the nineteenth century. *NSTC*, as it is certain to be known, aims at nothing less than an index to the thousands of volumes of printed and guard-book catalogues and card-indexes of the five major research libraries of the United Kingdom and that of Trinity College, Dublin to be supplemented, in the second phase, by incorporating catalogues of smaller specialist libraries for holdings of books in English (and translations into other languages from English) printed between 1801 and 1818. *NSTC* is an enterprise of unimaginable difficulty and magnitude. It is offered to the world of scholarship by a remarkable collaboration between the Librarian of one of the world's greatest libraries - the Bodleian - J.W. Jolliffe, who is chairman of the academic and executive committee of the project, and a small publishing company (acronymically styled Aveo from the names of Ms Averley and Dr and Mrs Robinson) which clearly regards the impossible as so much nonsense.

British enthusiasm for books has been pre-eminent, and it is evident in libraries (our great research and public libraries owe their very existence to enthusiastic individuals), in catalogues and lists of their contents and in chronological and subject bibliographies (ever since Leland) which are the envy of European neighbours. *NSTC*, formally launched at a reception in the Bodleian Library last month, is a research tool in a familiar heroic tradition.

Since it comes hard on the heels of the recently completed first phase of *ESTC* (the *Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue* of the British Library collections), it is natural that comparisons between the two projects will be made. Such comparisons should, however, take account of the fact that an index to several catalogues (without recourse to the original books) is a quite different undertaking from a project which set out to compile a catalogue based on examination of the books. *NSTC*, whatever its limitations, is an honest and wholly commendable endeavour to continue the record of the published writing of the English-speaking peoples beyond 1800. Of course it will be inadequate. So were the contributions of Bullen, Pollard and Redgrave, and Wing. They built upon what was to hand, and what was to hand were catalogues and lists: some excellent, some mediocre and some frankly useless. *NSTC* belongs to that tradition, and should be so evaluated. It has elected to map, however provisionally, the nineteenth century. The result, as far as it can be legitimately judged from the first volume of the first series, is an acceptable (even rewarding) alternative to doing nothing.

It would be injudicious to comment on the

project without restating succinctly its scope, its sources and the methods adopted. Clarification of these matters is to be found not in the preface, which seems to be unnecessarily defensive ("This compilation is intended for the use of almost all students of aspects of history except bibliographers"), but rather in the introduction (a slight three and a half pages); in the project's *Newsletter* (No 1, October, 1983); and in a brief article in a *Newsletter* (No 22, 1983) of the Rare Books Group of the Library Association. A momentous enterprise, which is sure to attract a great deal of attention throughout the scholarly community, deserves more than its perfunctory introduction as printed.

The scope is broad and comprehensive: "all books published in Britain, its colonies and the United States of America; all books in English wherever published; and all translations from English". I take it for granted that "books" here stands for "publications", since the first volume itemizes hundreds of single sheets. Nor is it clear that certain types of material are implicitly excluded: eg. engraved material and single-sheet maps, music and prints - even if such material does get listed if it happens to be separately catalogued in the sources used. It would have been prudent to stress that material described in the catalogues of the Map and Music collections in the British Library were specifically excluded (even though both catalogues list "books" in large quantities). Libraries considering the purchase of a series of volumes of this extent have a right to know what they are getting.

The project's *Newsletter* goes further than the introduction in suggesting future developments: that it is only practical as a large scale project if: a) the first sweep is concentrated upon the general history of value of each entry - its author, title, subject, place of imprint and date, rather than upon the bibliographical niceties of collation, b) it is capable of later updating from further sources, c) it is made readily available for use, improvement and refinement - i.e. in hard copy, as well as on-line access, and within a reasonable time compass.

The three points being made have fundamental significance for directions the project may take in the future, and their disclosure might help to persuade libraries that *NSTC* could well prove more than it seems.

The "form of entry" (which is described in the proper place) is eccentric, unfamiliar to most users of printed catalogues and, given the fact that all the data is in machine-readable form, could certainly be improved on. I will do the publishers a favour by attempting to make clear what some computer programmer has perversely sought to make obscure.

Entries are of two basic kinds: simple and complex. Simple entries describe titles by authors of a few works; complex entries describe titles by authors (personal and corporate) with a substantial corpus for which sub-headings are required. Within either category the following format (printed in three columns per page) is adopted.

1. The *NSTC* number (unique to title)
2. The heading (name, distinguishing epithet, dates)
3. [Subheading - if required]
4. [Cross-reference - if required]
5. Title (with ellipses)
6. [Other titles - if required]
7. Dewey decimal subject classification(s)
8. [Edition number - if required]
9. Date(s)
10. Place of publication (other than London)
11. Format/size
12. Location(s)

Of these (4), (6), (8), (9), (10), (11) and (12) are repeatable within an entry. The following may be taken as typical:

B750
 BARROW, John Sir, Barr. 1764-1848
 An account of Travels into . . . Interior . . .
 Southern Africa . . . 1797 . . . 1798 . . .
 geography . . . natural history . . . sketches . . .
 tribes . . . Cape of Good Hope . . . description . . .
 present state . . . colony . . . map constructed . . .
 observations . . .
 < 556.916.968
 1801/04 (2v) 4° + CDELO < 2
 1806 (2v) 4° + LO < 1815 8° C
 PARK, Mungo + EC < 1801/06 Paris
 (2v) 8° (French trans. . . . L.
 Degrandpre) + E
 This entry describes Barrow's *Account*,
 subject-coded as 556 (Geology of Africa); 916

(General Geography - Africa) and 968 (General History - South Africa) in four editions: the first, published as a quarto in two volumes at London (1801-04), with copies located (under the heading given) at five libraries, Cambridge, Dublin, Edinburgh, London (British Library) and Oxford; a second edition, in two quarto volumes, published at London in 1806, located at London and Oxford; an octavo London edition (one volume) published in 1815 (under the author heading of Mungo Park), at Edinburgh; and a French translation (by L. Degrandpre) in two octavo volumes published in Paris (1801-06), also at Edinburgh. The presentation may be odd, but interpreting the iterative devices (common to all short-title catalogues) is not difficult. What is important, however, is the fact that the compilers have attempted to assist the user by providing clues to where, in the source catalogues, the main entry is to be found. By including cross-references *NSTC* has performed a valuable service to researchers who will use the catalogues as a finding tool for the holdings of the six libraries indexed. And "indexed" seems the appropriate word, for that is really what *NSTC* seeks to do, and it is a service performed by no union catalogue that I am familiar with.

The principles adopted for the headings are fairly straightforward: if the book is in the British Library *General Catalogue* or its *Supplement* (known as *GK3* but referred to in *NSTC* as L, L1, L2 and L3) then the *GK3* heading is used; items entered, in the catalogues at Trinity College, Dublin, and Cambridge University Library, at the first word of the title are given a heading which conforms to *GK3* practice. For complex headings (eg *Bible*) subheadings are provided. Clearly a great deal of effort has been devoted to headings, and in many cases the *NSTC* heading is an improvement on *GK3*. Thus "() BOSMAN" in *GK3* (author of *Bosman's balance for weighing a corn law*, 1815) - entered in *NUC* as "BOSMAN, pseud." - is identified as "John BOSMAN".

Titles are more fully transcribed than is usual in short-title catalogues, with liberal use of ellipses. On checking the title-pages of many entries in the catalogue I was occasionally irritated to discover the frequency with which " . . . " takes the place of "from", "to", "the", etc. I did notice, however, in scanning the entries in this first volume, that those under the letter C are noticeably fuller, and with fewer ellipses.

Imprint information is minimal, with places other than London being given (conveniently indexed separately at the end of the volume), but no other details provided. This is due not to any lack of concern for imprint information (so important for the history of the book trade) but because most of the catalogues used are inconsistent in their provision of such detail. Format is provided for all items found in *GK3*, but the other libraries indexed appear to have no discernible pattern.

Statistics based on *NSTC* entries must be provisional. I found it surprising, for example, that of the 12,839 title entries for A-C (describ-

ing some 50,000 separate editions) the copies recorded yield the following (percentages as integers):

L 47%	of all items	30%	of uniquely held items
O 21%	"	8%	"
C 15%	"	5%	"
E 11%	"	4%	"
D 5%	"	2%	"

The aggregate percentage of copies held uniquely by each library is almost fifty per cent, which suggests that our major research libraries are not as similar in their collections as one might have supposed.

One feature of *NSTC* which may give rise to difficulties (even if it is an extremely useful feature) is the inclusion of Dewey decimal subject-codings. Dewey himself was aware of the shortcomings of his system. "Theoretically, the division of every subject into just nine heads is absurd." Quite so. Especially when each generation redefines the intellectual basis for the classification of knowledge. It would have been a subtle touch if Dewey's original classification headings of 1876 had been used rather than those for current Dewey. It is, after all, a nineteenth-century view of the world that lies behind the organization of the ten major divisions. I leave the reader to judge from the following comparative table which are more appropriate to a classification for nineteenth-century books:

Dewey 1876	Dewey 1981
130 Mind and Body	Popular & Parapsychology
360 Associations. Institutions	Social Pathology & Services
650 Communications. Commerce	Managerial Services
710 Landscape Gardening	Civic & Landscape Art

The editors of *NSTC* are aware of the problems created by Dewey classification, and in the indexes at the end of the volume have expanded some headings (as Dewey suggested should be done). This approach (possible only with editors who know something of their history) is a highly important feature of *NSTC*, and one which students and researchers will find very useful.

The subject index is complemented by an imprint index, arranged by country. Cumulations of these indexes will no doubt appear in due course, but it was a generous gesture to include them for each volume. For those interested in books printed at Edinburgh, sermons, or criminal trials, the imprint and subject indexes provide plenty to be getting on with until the next volume appears. On the other hand it is difficult to know where to start with political pamphlets - they are scattered everywhere. I know of no subject catalogue which does not at some time create disappointment. When disappointed we should perhaps remember that Draud (1611) thought that bibliography belonged to "philosophy". Perhaps he was right.

Identifying errors in a compilation of this sort is easy enough, since it is based on catalogues which abound in errors, and differ widely in cataloguing practice. Some mis-

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takes might, however, have been avoided. For example, Richard Foster's *An address to the nation, on the importance of agriculture* (1815) appears twice – A423 and A424. The entries are of different length, and while A423 is located at D and L, A424 is also at C and O.

The question which I have no doubt will be asked by every librarian and scholar concerns the extent to which *NSTC* will, given its definition of scope and the sources it is based upon, represent the total output of the printing press in the English-speaking world in the period between 1801 and 1918. By the end of the eighteenth century the annual output of the printing presses in the British Isles as represented by the British Library's collections exceeds 3,000. It is reasonable to suppose that by 1900 that annual total had risen to 25,000. In America, the pattern of growth is evident in the fact that the bibliography for 1801 records 1,700, and that for 1834 has risen to 7,000 publications. It is likely, therefore, that totals for the century will be of the order of 700,000 (USA), and 1,500,000 (British Isles). A total for the remaining parts of the world under British influence must be 500,000. Add translations, and books printed in English in non-British countries, and the grand total can hardly be less than three million. A great deal of this material is not held by the libraries covered by *NSTC*. If the pattern of holdings of American books in the British copyright libraries for the first volume of *NSTC* remains fairly constant, then it is unlikely that their combined resources will account for more than ten per cent of the books printed in North America. (There are some traps in store for unwary readers of *GK3*: I wonder if Hiram Bingham's translation of the Gospels into the language of the Gilbert Islands with the imprint *Nu loki* – New York – was spotted as American?)

The total I have suggested (staggering though it may seem) is based upon another factor which *NSTC* is unable to account for: the vast collections of separately printed items which are relegated to collective ("dump") headings in the catalogues of all major research libraries. In *GK3* they are notably provided under the heading *COLLECTION*. These will be found in *NSTC* at C2915–2976. Their subject classification (for the most part) as 784 (Music) is disingenuous since "ballads" are, if anything, popular literature (not catered for in Dewey). It would be a valuable service to scholarship if all uncatalogued collections were entered in the subject indexes (Dewey 080 would serve). The British Library has, at least, produced a guide to some of the important collections it possesses: *Named special collections in the Department of Printed Books* by Alison Gould (available gratis in the Reading Room). The Official Publications Library has lists and indexes to the massive collections of government publications not separately catalogued.

Wig interpretations

Antony Whitaker

ELIZABETH A. MARTIN (Editor)
A Concise Dictionary of Law
349pp. Oxford University Press. £9.95.
0 198253990

The evolution of legal language consists largely in the invention of a shorthand which, though meaningless and cumbersome for the layman, is an instrument of some precision for those who use it. *A Concise Dictionary of Law* has set itself the task of unravelling and explaining it. The entries are succinctly drafted and clearly written.

It is not, however, as the title might imply, a lawyers' lexicon. The day of those tomes – multi-volume works of immense weight, which aspired to chart the entire landscape of legal language and definition – is anyway long past. Their lifespan shortened as the cascade of legislation and case-law increased, and they now gather dust on the upper shelves, unedited and unedited, tombstones to a more spacious and less regulated society than the one we know today. The Oxford University Press have recognized this, and instead seek to satisfy a wider audience. They have aimed at "lesser breeds

None of this is intended as a criticism of *NSTC*. If that project cannot record the collections of nineteenth-century English printing in the copyright libraries, that is due to the inadequacy of their catalogues. It has always been so. Librarians (and I use the term in a way which is intended to distinguish that profession from administrators of leisure-centres or information-stores) have traditionally recognized the importance of acquisition, and subordinated the means of access to what has been acquired to a lower priority. This has been, on the whole, a policy which has ensured the survival of much that has been acquired. But the "advancement of learning" depends upon access to the record of what has gone before. There will always be a need for subsets of the whole, and their arrangement is crucial to the development of scholarship. Some will be by author; by subject; by genre; by chronology; by language. They are all part of that fundamental need to reduce chaos to order. *NSTC* is such a subset. In spite of its limitations, in spite of the fact that, in the words of Bodley's Librarian, "it is simple, even naive", it is in the best tradition of "amateur" bibliography. If you think that is said with disapprobation, look again at the title-page of Brunet's *Manuel du libraire*.

NSTC has begun its odyssey at a time when criticism is easy. Expectations of bringing order to the record of printing have never been higher, nor resources lower. Our national libraries are squandering precious resources in the pursuit of a particular kind of perfection encouraged by the possibilities provided by computers. But it is an expensive obsession which could threaten the commonwealth of learning, for how libraries spend their money has more than a passing interest for those who depend upon them for what Bacon called "Studies". Meanwhile, there are a few stubborn spirits who believe in the virtues of practicalities. Using simple methods, and an almost primitive technology, D. F. McKenzie is succeeding in making available to New Zealand the library resources of that country for books printed before 1800, faithful to a tradition five hundred years old. If enumerative bibliography has advanced it has been due to the Leflands and the Mausells of this world. The "professionals" (a self-invented group) have contributed little. The boast of the successful catalogue (of whatever kind) remains what it has always been: "Show me one, and I shall show you ten."

J. W. Jolliffe puts it nicely in his preface: we need maps before we need charts. We need the Arrowsmiths; we need the Dalrymples; and they need each other if honest map-making and honest charting are to flourish. Before too long the chart-makers of the nineteenth century will be grateful to *NSTC* for making their task easier. That is why it is an important project, and why it should be supported.

without the law" – as those within it might complacently dub them – the adjacent vineyards, such as banking, accountancy, the civil service (if only they could learn to articulate as clearly) and business, large or small. It is a quick reference handbook to help them through the linguistic undergrowth of the law.

Precision for the professional is combined with a layman's enlightenment. "Restraint of princes", contrary to popular belief, has nothing to do with the duties of royal governors; nor Machiavellian advice as to how to retain power. It is a risk normally excluded from marine insurance policies – the requisitioning of shipping in time of war, as happened during the Falklands conflict. "Clogs on the equity" are not wooden galoshes worn by Chancery judges, nor are "knockout agreements", fraudulent boxing matches. The "synallagmatic" contract is merely one imposing mutual obligations: for obvious reasons, advocates prefer the less contentious "bilateral" agreement. Finally, users of the *Dictionary* should be careful with the "verbals", or comments by arrested suspects. They have not yet emerged from police slang, are apt to provoke strong reactions from the bench and badly need the insertion of "colloq." in the next edition.

Savoury parts only

Eric Korn

JOHN CIARDI
The Second Browser's Dictionary and
Native's Guide to the Unknown American
Language
330pp. Harper and Row. £11.50.
0 06 015125 0

But who is this Second Browser? To browse, says *OED*, is to crop the tender parts of rough plants for food, "sometimes carelessly used for graze but properly implying the cropping of scanty vegetation". If John Ciardi is preferring only the juicy bits of lexicography and etymology, then he has browsed so that we may graze; if he has, additionally, digested the tough bits, then the image becomes more disquieting.

This is in truth an anthology of savoury bits, garnered from a variety of mostly secondary sources for those who do not wish to venture themselves into the rough pasture, and flavoured (or fermented) with Ciardi's strong opinions. It is entertaining and provoking in about equal parts, but since the provocation drives the reader back to the sources to see if Ciardi has got it right, the provocation is also entertaining.

Ciardi can be enjoyably sharp, qualifying "vibes" as "Beat Generation psychobabble"; exemplifying "write the book on" with the phrase "Ronald Reagan wrote the book on economic ignorance"; and roundly castigating trade-mark lawyers, those would-be enclosers of lexical common land. His bile, unfortunately, is not always admirable: his publishers would not have permitted him to speak of any other ethnic group as he does of the Gypsies – the United States uses "gypsy" as we do "cowboy" – eg. "gypsy cab" – and he is vulgarly Francophone.

Ciardi is censorious about what he calls "spook etymology": the fanciful academic guess which lacks or ignores evidence; thus "posh" meant "money" and thence "flash" long before P & O Shipping carried the better-heeled passengers Port Out Starboard Home (and likewise "crap" long antedates Thomas Crapper). But "sparrowgrass" for "asparagus" is seventeenth-century, and surely qualifies as

Tags and trends

Roy Foster

CHRIS COOK
Dictionary of Historical Terms: A guide to the
main themes, events, cliques and innuendoes
of over 1000 years of world history
304pp. Macmillan. £20 (paperback, £7.95).
0 333 28470 4
BRUCE WETTERAU
Concise Dictionary of World History
867pp. Hale. £26.95.
0 7090 1380 9

Both these books reflect and reinforce a trend long obvious in American scholarship, and now evident everywhere: the need to handle instant jargon. The authors emphasize that their priority is to compile "names and terms"; Chris Cook scores because he restricts himself to such abstractions, resolutely cutting out biographical entries. His dictionary is, in fact, a terse and useful reference for fashionable tags in foreign languages – particularly when he also gives a full definition of the secondary usage in a case like "Bonapartism". (It is, on the other hand, less than helpful simply to provide a literal translation of "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft", without putting the words in apposition to each other and expanding upon the derived meaning.)

Cook's frame of reference is strongly political; his "Yellow Book" is all about Lloyd George and Keynes, nothing to do with Beardsley and Wilde, and art history is conspicuously lacking (no Nabiz or Fauves). The concepts he chooses to define similarly owe more to political science than sociology ("social contract" but no "social control"). In some areas, revisionism has inevitably outpaced him (the Fourth Party is no longer seen as "radical", and "Defenderism" spread far outside Ulster). It is surprising to be referred to "Pussyteas" for

folk, not spook, etymology – what Ciardi happily calls a fossil poem.

His own suggestion that "copesetie" (fine, OK: United States Black slang, recorded from 1919) is cognate with Hebrew "kol b'seder" (all in order), a phrase surely no older than the revival of spoken Hebrew and probably younger than the state of Israel, seems pretty spooky, and his hypothesis of a Southern pennsylvanian with a Hebrew catchphrase picked up by his customers, although tentative, is quite whimsical.

I was pleased to learn the rustic sense of "stump-broken" (used of a cow habituated to sodomy), intrigued to learn that American young describe an odd-ball as "out of his furrow" and astounded that readers of Ciardi's first volume have written to him denying that "roger" is used in a sexual context. They need look no further than the *OED* supplement, which cites Ezra Pound, Boswell, Dylan Thomas and the pseudonymous Philo Cunnus. (There's a clothing store near Valletta called "Cunny's"; the proprietor told me his daughter suggested the name.)

Ciardi is chauvinistic in referring to the 1897 Boston Marathon, rather than the 1896 Athens race; he uses "back formation" in the sense of abbreviation; he relates "fulsome" to "foul" rather than "full" and describes as "misuse" senses that go back to the thirteenth century; he believes that Joe Hill was shot by company police rather than by the judicial process of Utah; he ignores the sexual associations of "horsefeathers" in favour of some spookiness about "house feathers", and he says that "beigel" reintroduces a lost root to English (what about "baguette"?). He also offers an anecdotal explanation of "flogging a dead horse" ("dead horse" was a sailor's term for working off pay that had been received and spent before the voyage) that stretches credulity far beyond the snapping-point.

But I am becoming infected with the amateur lexicographer's disease of assertion instead of argument: a fatal epidemic of which Ciardi is aware, but to which he falls victim. Dare I suggest that "honcho" (a great mystery to Ciardi) is Japanese "Hōn chō", with same meaning, "schlemiel" is "schlimazl", that "Panjandrum" is "Panchen Rinpoche"? I dare not.

both "Tractarianism" and "Oxford Movement". Some entries will be outdated by next week ("P2", for example); but the book certainly has its uses for this week's essay or lecture.

The *Dictionary of Historical Terms* is a masterpiece of sophistication beside the *Concise Dictionary of World History*. Bruce Wetterau's lumbering compilation. Appositely described by its author as "staggering", it reels and lurches beyond "names and terms" into thousands of biographical entries, soon abandoning any effort at comprehensive definitions. Foreigners are kept in their place ("French Action" turns out to be the *Action française*), and the bias is robustly American. "United States" receives a fifteen-page chronology of events, in the style of the medieval annals and about as useful; the similar entry for "Great Britain" is less than half the length.

Wetterau's preface disdains interpretation ("it was not possible to dwell on questions of debate"), though naturally selection implies judgment; where descriptions are needed he relies upon the meaningless word "noted" (C. Parnell, the noted Irish leader); Wetterau is noted for his rendering of natural scenes. But the very fact that – for instance – one of these books defines "Tories" as a coherent party throughout the eighteenth century, and the other does not, shows historical debate inevitably creeping in. To make the point might seem banal; but one often has the uneasy feeling that "reference books" of this order are designed for, and in some cases compiled by, minds that trustingly believe in easy access to incorrupt truth. The question of their usefulness to historians really that tired adage about the prices of luxury cars: those who need to get (at least from these sources) cannot really be customers.

Childhood as Eden

Mark Casserley

J. R. WATSON
Wordsworth's Vital Soul: The Sacred and
Profane in Wordsworth's Poetry
259pp. Macmillan. £20.
0 333 30962 6

Wordsworth, according to J. R. Watson, "has always been vulnerable to the cheap sneer". It is certainly true that his poetry is widely taken to be uneven, or, as Professor Watson has it, "his symbols do not always seem to hold the Eternal within the Temporal in a translucent way". Watson contends, however, that readers are often at fault in failing to see that the poetry, as a whole, "is concerned with beliefs and values which are basic to an understanding of man's relations with man, and man's relations to God". Accordingly, Watson concerns himself less with Wordsworth's language and style, or his literary-historical significance, than with "the poetry of his subject-matter".

Watson's exploration uses concepts borrowed from the anthropology of primitive religious belief and ritual, in particular Van Gennep's investigation of *rites de passage*, and Eliade's ideas about "sacred" and "profane" views of the world. He bases this technique on the claim that the imaginative structures of Wordsworth's poetry are "close to" those of religious experience, and stresses the position of the young child in a paradise akin to primitive tribal life ("as if I had been born / On Indian Plains") in the opening of the 1799 *Prelude*. Watson's first section describes the creation of a poetic myth of childhood out of the elements of experience (Lévi-Strauss's *bricolage*). The growth of child into adult brings awareness of the contrast between this ideal and the real world, hence the social concerns of *Lyrical Ballads*. The second part resumes the discussion at the childhood stage: "Nature" is conceived in terms of the sacred: sacred places, charged with a special meaning or *mana*; and sacred time, removed from everyday chronology. The poet is a shaman – the child in "There was a Boy . . ." possesses "the shamanic ability to communicate with birds, and is in paradise". The final section begins in childhood once more, with the child's need for a secure

material base. Watson emphasizes the importance of "home" for Wordsworth, especially in *The Excursion*, which is regarded as a sustained enquiry into the nature of an ideal society. The poet's later position is one of conventional and orthodox Christianity, but this develops naturally out of the experiences of the early years, just as the power of Wordsworth's early (and, for Watson, religious) apprehensions is central to his mature poetry.

Watson shows a clear interest in the poetry as an expression of Wordsworth's development, as is reasonable given that *The Prelude* is about the growth of the poet's mind. There is, however, a naive biographical approach to some passages: of Book IV of *The Prelude*, for example, he comments that "During this long vacation, there is, for Wordsworth, a very active and wide-ranging emotional life." More importantly, Watson suggests that the two-part *Prelude* of 1799 shows Wordsworth enjoying his first poetic spirit unmodified by later experiences in Cambridge, London and France. In the sense that the later texts discuss these experiences whereas 1799 does not, this is correct, but that does not alter the fact that Wordsworth is writing from the perspective given by all his experience. He recaptures mo-

ments from his childhood, which become the source of poetic power, as he writes. The relationship is not a chronological one, but involves the effort of memory and recreation.

Watson engages in some *bricolage* of his own: one of his main critical techniques is the putting together of extensive comparisons. The text is indeed littered with comparative terms, phrases such as "bears a close resemblance to" or "is akin to" doing duty for a provable relationship. Some of the comparisons seem particularly unhelpful: "Simon Lee" is felt to be reminiscent of *Waiting for Godot*, on the grounds that there is a lack of incident in both pieces; this is part of an extended series which also brings in *La Nausée* and Wilfred Owen.

One suspects that the real usefulness of this method is in enabling Watson to discuss Wordsworth in terms of the authors and ideas that interest him; Martin Buber is especially important here. The slippery terminology becomes particularly active when the idea of the "I-Thou" relation between the outside world and the individual is introduced in such a way as to suggest that Buber and Wordsworth are really writing about the same things. Unfortunately a high-flown jargon results; the termi-

nology becomes purely honorific, and loses all descriptive power.

Indeed, one of the major problems with this book is that of relating what Watson has written, to Wordsworth. Time and again an interesting idea is blurred by the dragging in of material from extra-poetic sources. More important, the view of Wordsworth that one derives from the book makes him seem platitudinous, whereas that is only one aspect of him; and he is made more defensive than perhaps he was. The importance attached to "home", and the persistent references to Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise (to which almost every experience seems to be "akin"), over-emphasize the nostalgic element.

There are, none the less, illuminating passages: it is good to read of the child Wordsworth "unconsciously aware of a proximate transcendence", and there are other instances in which an interesting discussion is started – though only to be curtailed by the entry of Professor Watson's intellectual stage-machinery. The terms in which he has chosen to discuss Wordsworth make it difficult to do more than acknowledge the relevance of the things he finds important about the poet; it is not so easy to assess the degree of that relevance.

Reading Earth's purposes

Simon Rae

GEORGE MEREDITH
Selected Poems
Edited by Keith Hanley
121pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £4.95.
0 85635 416 3

Meredith's description of himself as "an unpopular novelist and an unaccepted poet" was, in 1902, somewhat disingenuous. In this, the last decade of his life, he was the Grand Old Man of English Letters, the toast of literary gatherings, respected by statesmen, revered by the wider public, if not necessarily widely read. And yet there is a bitter kernel of truth in that "unaccepted". For several of the ten collections of poetry published in his lifetime Meredith had to bear the printing costs, and his

treatment at the hands of reviewers was so savage that from 1888 he forbade the sending out of review copies. After the furor created by *Modern Love* in 1862 – "a grave moral mistake", as the *Saturday Review* put it – the main charge against the poetry was its obscurity.

Rather more than obscurity stands in the way of a ready acceptance of Meredith's poetry today. Only in *Modern Love*, "the most unrelieved statement on the ugliness generated by a close relationship", in one critic's formulation, does Meredith offer the sort of psychological drama for which Browning is still read. As a poet, Meredith was scarcely interested in men and women, and his poetry increasingly became the vehicle for his "philosophy". He eschews the narrative and dramatic modes adopted by his great contemporaries, and too often allows his immense verbal facility to issue in an unchecked rhapsodic spate. Far too large a proportion of the poems exhibit a long-windedness, opinionatedness and a desire to preach that are at odds with contemporary taste. Meredith himself was not completely blind to his possible shortcomings. In 1893 he wrote to his agent, "What would be given for a poem of about 400 lines, rather dull, full of morality and merit?"

It is obvious then that Meredith needs to be carefully weeded if he is to find a modern readership outside the universities. But while there is no question about what cannot be left out – *Modern Love* entire, the two versions of "Love in the Valley", "Lucifer in Starlight" and other regularly anthologized lyrics – the question of what to put in is more difficult. Graham Hough, who made the last attempt in 1962,

rather threw in his hand with the claim that selection after *Modern Love* "becomes an arbitrary process".

Keith Hanley retains a higher estimation of Meredith's later poetry than that implies. In his excellent introductory essay to this new Carcanet selection, he gives a clear exposition of Meredith's "optimistic naturalism", the object of which was to reconcile man to his fate through a "reading" of the purposes of "Earth" (Nature) in which meaning is wrested from human suffering and eventual death. Meredith was impatient with Tennyson's "lotter-knee d" trepidation in the face of Nature "red in tooth and claw", and faintly trusting to the larger hopes was very definitely not his style. But for all the Carlylean rigour of his assertions regarding the majestic materialism of "Earth", most readers will find *In Memoriam* rings truer to the experience of the individual contemplating a natural order "careless of the single life".

Hanley's selection is designed "to represent the span and variety of a body of poetry published over almost sixty years", though the principle of "completeness" (surely a bar to the satisfactory representation of most nineteenth-century poets, and hardly justified in view of Meredith's own tailor-like cuttings of his poetic cloth) means that the reader will not find anything from the longer poems such as "The Woods of Westminster" or "The Nuptials of Attila". "A Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt" might have been included to demonstrate Meredith's feminist sympathies, and I would have been pleased to find "Jump-to-Glory Jane", a mild and delightful satire on a religious sect given to bodily convulsions.

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Illustration: Wrestler (relief)
Late 6th century BC, Athens

Soseki

(London: December 1901)

A lost dog slinking through a pack of wolves.

Sour yellow droplets frozen on each branch,
The tainted breath of winter in the fog:
Coal-smells, and cooking-smells (meat-fat, stewed-fish),
And smells of horse-dung steaming in the streets:
Smoke groping at the windowpanes, a stain
Left hanging by the mean lamp where I trace
Page after page of Craig's distempered notes . . .

Winter withering
Autumn's last scattering leaves:
London is falling.

I want a theory, a science with firm rules
Plotting the truth objectively through all these infinite spaces.
I look out of the window over the whitened blankness,
And from the Eastern Mountains the moon lights up half the river.

But it is hallucination: cab-lights from Clapham Common
Flash at the pane, my head throbs over the little fire,
I am crying in the darkness, my cheeks sticky with tears.
Far, far beyond the heavens the forms of departing clouds . . .

Downstairs, those sisters plot and scheme together—
I found the penny on the windowsill,
The one I gave the beggar yesterday. Ridiculous pity,
Sly instruments of torture!

"Soseki's mad" —

That telegram sent home by Okakura —
Will they believe it? Is it so? Is he my friend?
I have no friends. By the light of the dying fire
I underscore these lines, and more, and more . . .

December evening.
Light at the window shining.
Something in hiding.

London is districts learned from Baedeker
And learned on foot. England is somewhere else.
A day in Cambridge seeing Doctor Andrews,
The Dean of Pembroke, offering me sherry.
Too many "gentlemen" — at Oxford too.
Someone said *Edinburgh*, but the speech up there
Is northern dialect, Hokkaido-style.
So London it must be — the Tower, its walls
Scrawled with the dying words of men condemned;
Lodgings in Gower Street with Mrs Knot;
That vast Museum piled with pallid Greeks;
West Hampstead, and then Camberwell New Road . . .
I measure out the metres as I walk,
Finding sad poetry in the names of places.

Sometimes, walking the streets thronged with such tall and handsome ones,
I see a dwarf approaching, his face sweaty — and then
I know it for my own reflection, cast back from a shop-window.
I laugh, it laughs. "Yellow races" — how appropriate.

"Least poor Chinese" — I think I hear — or "Handsome Jap"
Sneers of a group of labourers, seeing me go by.
In frock-coat, top-hat, parody of "English gentleman"
Sauntering down King's Parade or in the High
I walk to Bloomsbury, walk back to Clapham,
Carrying my Meredith or my Gosse through the drizzle,
Munching with difficulty a "sandwich" on a bench in the park
Soaked by the rain, buffeted by the wind . . .

Far, far beyond the heavens the forms of departing clouds,
And in the wind the sound of falling leaves.

It is time to be deliberate, to use
Such gifts as I am given, to escape
The traveller's to-and-fro, the flow of facts
Unchecked, to make a system that will join
Blossom to branch, and reason to intuition,
Wave after wave uniting as each falls
Under the next that follows up the beach . . .

A cry outside shakes
The tangle of waterpipes:
Midnight: a mouse squeaks.

A frightened mouse in a cell facing north,
I have almost forgotten what brought me here
Or what I do from day to day.

I know
I sat with Craig for an hour this morning,
Hearing him mumbling Shakespeare through his beard,
And gave him seven shillings in an envelope
Bound round with ribbon which he plucked away
Impatiently and mannerless — due fee
For pedagogic drudgery. So walked back,
Wondering could I afford a mess of eggs
In the cabby-shelter out in Battersea,
And settled for a farthing bun and "tea"
Scabby with milk served in a cracked white mug
At the stall by Wandsworth Bridge. Such humdrum things
To maze the mind and clog the intellect . . .

By the old castle at Komoro
The clouds are white and the wanderer grieves.

Impenetrable people, country bumpkins,
Nincompoop monkeys, good-for-nothing
Ashen-faced puppets — yes, it's natural
Westerners should despise us. They don't know
Japan, nor are they interested. Even if
We should deserve their knowledge and respect,
There would be neither — because they have no time
To know us, eyes to see us . . . Lesser breeds:
We need *improvement* (Brett has told me so),
And Western intermarriage would improve us.
We are the end of something, on the edge.

The loneliness, the grieving heart of things,
The emptiness, the solving fate that brings
An answer to the question all men ask,
Solution to the twister and the task.

"Tears welling up in a strange land,
I watch the sun set in the sea":
Yes, true, but for the sun, which once a week
May slide itself weakly through pale clouds,
And for the sea, which somewhere — south or east —
Lies far beyond me, and is not my sea.
But tears well up, indeed, in a strange land
And speak of nothing but my lack of speech.
Curt monosyllables jab and jabber on,
Perverse versions of the tongue I know
Or thought I knew — the language Shakespeare spoke,
And Samuel Johnson's sonorous clauses mouthed
By me, alone, in Kanda, Matsuyama,
In Kumamoto . . . sailing through such seas
And on such seas of rhetoric and doubt.
Towards these other islands where the sun
Has set before it rises, Ultima Thule,
Where tears well up and freeze on every branch.

I creep into my bed, I hear the wolves.

ANTHONY THWAITE

Keeping it separate

Sally Alexander

LEE HOLCOMBE
Wives and Property: Reform of the Married Women's Property Law in Nineteenth-Century England
311pp. Oxford: Martin Robertson. £17.50.
083220 607 1

The Married Women's Property Act of 1882 enabled a married woman to hold her "separate property, in the same manner as if she were a femme sole without the intervention of any trustee", and so dissolved the legal unity of husband and wife. By "abolishing the family in the old sense", as *The Times* anticipated in 1868, and "breaking up society again into men and women" the Act marked a victory for economic individualism but not yet for either representative government or the principle of equality between the sexes. Lee Holcombe's *Wives and Property* is most particularly useful for its detailed investigation of the changing economic and political status of married women under the law — a history which is succinctly brought up to date in the final chapter. It is most interesting for the reflections it provokes on the connections between political ideologies, the formation of public opinion and their impact on parliamentary government.

Legislation had limped behind the aspirations of feminists during the twenty-five years before 1882. Relations between the sexes, though they prompted some elevated debate on the principles of social justice, dispensation of the law and the meaning of marriage, made little impact on the House of Commons, in spite of the feminists' diligent accumulation of petitions, pursuit of "friends" in both Houses, and ceaseless issue of propaganda in their cause. Reform succeeded, Holcombe argues, above all because it accorded with the aims of both the Liberal and the Conservative parties as well as those of the legal profession to sweep away the labyrinthine and overlapping jurisdictions of four distinct bodies of law. It was judged especially necessary to bring common law and equity into a rational and efficient unity: these aims were embodied in the 1873 Judicature Act. Holcombe also follows A. V. Dicey in offering a causal relationship between the economy and law. By the mid-nineteenth century, industrialization had fragmented the economic unity of the family. Over three-quarters of a million married women worked for wages outside the home, and this income had to be "protected". Those members of Parliament who balked at the imagined horrors of wives of the wealthy accepting gifts from lovers or entering into inappropriate transactions with men who were not their relatives, were moved to pity and a regenerated sense of social obligation by the thought of profligate and tyrannical husbands seizing the earnings of working women among the poor. The impulse to protect the weak finally overcame Parliament's reluctance to interfere in that most "intimate and delicate relation in life".

Opposition hinged on the political as well as the domestic effects of reform. Since property was the basis of the franchise the redistribution of political power as well as of wealth was at issue. Liberal governments were responsible for passing The Married Woman's Property Act and the 1857 Divorce and 1870 property laws which preceded it, which seems to underline the natural affinity historians often assume between feminism and liberal thought in Victorian Britain — Holcombe herself situates feminism on the radical wing of Liberalism. In so far as popular Liberalism in the 1860s and 1870s is best described, in John Vincent's phrase, as a "community of sentiment", feminism did share some aspects of that sentiment: individual liberty, natural human rights, the infusion of morality into public life. But representative democracy — which was the direction which feminism's twin aspirations of economic independence and the full rights of citizenship took — met with a tepid response from Liberals in Parliament. The Liberals under Gladstone had not yet relinquished the notion of government as rule by public-spirited men who responded pragmatically to single issues or interest groups. For married women's property rights to have led to women's suffrage there would have to have been a revolution in

public conceptions of government. This was unlikely among men who were still debating the threat to the authority of the husband in the home, and for whom democracy, if it meant anything, meant the extension of the suffrage to limited numbers of working-class men. Representative democracy was eventually established as a concept in the political mind, not through the arguments of political philosophers, but through such violent social upheavals as the revival of socialism and the formation of the Labour Party, the surge of militant feminism, and a world war.

Feminism emerges from Holcombe's study as a rudimentary and eclectic political philosophy. Individually, feminists adhered to a range of beliefs from mesmerism to Anglicanism, from utopian socialism to Toryism. They were united by their belief in equality in education, and in employment, but before the law was passed there was equivocation over what might be its deeper implications. As Mrs Gaskell believed, no law would inhibit the brutish husband, while the mutual attraction between the sexes, "of which Satan was the originator", as well as women's pleasure in the domestic, rendered rational egalitarianism a difficult if worthy aim. Today of course, we still live with that difficulty.

Blowing cool

T. C. Barker

TAKAOMATSUMURA
The Labour Aristocracy: The Victorian Flint Glass Makers 1850-80
196pp. Manchester University Press. £13.50.
07190931 6

In their heyday, before modern machinery transformed glass-making from a laborious craft into a mechanical science, flint glass-makers, who blew many sorts of high-quality leaded tableware, were the most versatile and skilled members of the entire glass industry. Two teams, each consisting of a workman (or gaffer), servitor, footmaker and (boy) taker-in, operated together night and day in alternating six-hour shifts for forty-eight hours or more a week in quite appalling heat. The temperature at the mouth of the furnace, around 200°F, fell to about 100°F close by, where the working of the glass took place. Death frequently came early. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century over 37 per cent of the union's members had died by the age of forty and 59 per cent by fifty.

Takao Matsumura, who concentrates his attention particularly upon the Stourbridge area, makes further use of the *Flint Glass Makers' Magazine*, extensively consulted nearly half a century ago by the Webbs (Sidney took 256 pages of notes), in conjunction with business records, the 1861 census enumerators' books, parish registers and local newspapers, to show that, while the gaffers could earn about £2 a week and be described by their union as "men used to every comfort at home", the way to the short-lived top was hard and narrow. Few of the boys survived the weeding out to become apprentice footmakers and, of those who did, the majority were glass-makers' sons. Servitors earned only about two-thirds of a gaffer's wages, journeymen footmakers a third and apprentices a quarter. Many of these labour aristocrats, therefore, though sharing with the middle classes increasing financial expectations, were not particularly well-off by working-class standards, especially at the time of life when they had just married and were incurring additional expenditure.

The author also argues that these men were more militant than used to be supposed, but here he seems to be on less firm ground. He rightly takes the Webbs to task for eliding part of a passage from the union's *Magazine* ("We believe that strikes have been a bane to Trades Unions") while omitting the rest ("It must not be thought from the above that we have abandoned the idea of strikes in all cases; we know that in some cases they cannot be avoided"). He also criticizes them for dismissing the flint glass-makers' nine-month strike and lockout in a single sentence; but his own revealing chapter on this dispute hardly presents the Flint Glass Makers' Friendly Society as aggress-

Reports from the provinces

Iorwerth Prothero

J. GINSWICK (Editor)
Labour and the Poor in England and Wales 1849-1851
Volume 1: Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire
229pp.
0714629073
Volume 2: Northumberland and Durham, Staffordshire, The Midlands.
216pp.
071462960X
Volume 3: The Mining and Manufacturing Districts of South Wales and North Wales
0714629618
Frank Cass. £19.50 each (paperback, £9.50 each).

Henry Mayhew's famous survey of the British working population, *London Labour and the London Poor*, was published in its final, four-volume form, in 1861. His investigations were conducted on behalf of the liberal Peelite daily newspaper, the *Morning Chronicle*, by which he was employed, and his reports initially appeared in its pages. Subsequently he quarrelled with the paper and struggled to continue his researches independently and ultimately in book form. It was not properly recognized that

sive militants. Their preoccupation was with developing insurance schemes and limiting entry to the craft. Unfortunately for them, they chose a depressed period in 1850 to seek further apprenticeship restrictions and tried to set a higher minimum wage for the poorly paid journeymen footmakers. These demands, when pressed in September 1850, were resisted. By January 1851, with only half of the membership out, the union was already making conciliatory overtures, which were turned down by the employers, whose behaviour was much more hawkish. By May the union was glad to agree to a compromise. It was soon holding its annual picnic once more, at which flags were flown bearing the words "Prosperity to our Employers". Defence was evidently far more important than defiance.

This book is derived from a doctoral thesis. It is a considerable feat for a young Japanese scholar to achieve such a mastery of both the English language and English historical sources. He is, however, more concerned to relate his work to current discussions in labour and social history than to make a thorough account of the relationship between capital and labour in this particular branch of the glass industry, which is very relevant to his main arguments. He deals with classes and workers in general rather than with the leaders on either side or the highly competitive climate in which they operated. The union (900 strong in the early 1850s, 2,000 by the mid-70s) was, we are told, run by a Central Secretary who held office for three years and nominated his own committee. This group — a junta if there ever was one — conducted all the union's affairs between triennial conferences, the *Magazine* serving as an interim means of communication.

But who were these powerful people and what were their views on defence versus defiance? We are told nothing about the latter and next to nothing about the former. A few names of union leaders are mentioned but they appear as very shadowy figures, apart from one, Joseph Leicester, a founder of the union. The original Central Secretary, William Gillinder (1851-4), was concerned with the union's finances, wrote about "Emigration as a Means to an End", took his own advice and became a pressed-glass manufacturer in the United States. How many of the British manufacturers had themselves been workmen and how relevant to the generally co-operative behaviour of the workers was the small size of their flint-glass factories, each employing about thirty glassmakers and thirty cutters (who belonged to another union)? Far below them were the little "tribes" where the owner himself often acted as gaffer. The briefest mention is made of them here, though D. R. Guttery in his volume about Stourbridge, *From Broad Glass to Cut Crystal* (1956), has provided vivid glimpses of these examples of capitalism in its most precarious and struggling form.

Mayhew's four-volume work contains only a portion of his *Morning Chronicle* reports until recently, when E. P. Thompson and Eileen Yeo published a large selection of those that did not appear in his book, so rescuing them from obscurity and revealing the wealth of other information that lies in the pages of the *Morning Chronicle*.

Mayhew's investigations of the Metropolitan Districts were only part of a much more extensive survey launched by the paper in 1849 and carried on for eighteen months by five other correspondents in addition to Mayhew. This survey covered the manufacturing, mining and rural districts of England and Wales. It was partly a response to the renewed upsurge in 1848 of the radical Chartist movement and Britain's escape from turmoil in that year of Continental revolutions, to the severe and deadly cholera epidemic of 1849, and to the general awareness in the 1840s of the "Condition of England Question", exemplified in a number of official and private investigations and in works of fiction. But nothing else matched the national scope of this unique, detailed account of working-class life, and the provincial reports also have recently received attention. Some of them, by Angus Reach, covering the manufacturing districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, have been reprinted, and a judicious selection from the whole range was made by Ranzell and Wainwright in 1973. Now, for the first time, all the non-metropolitan reports are to be published in their entirety, in eight volumes, and the first three have just appeared. These cover the manufacturing and mining districts of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cheshire, the North-East, Staffordshire, the Midlands hosiery and lace region, and Wales. Subsequent volumes will cover Liverpool, Birmingham and all the rural districts of England.

Together the reports amount to a survey of mid-Victorian England of unparalleled breadth and rich detail, covering cities, towns and villages and providing masses of information on occupational and village communities, economic organization and changes, standards and way of life, leisure activities, housing, sanitary conditions, diet, sub-cultures, cellardwellings, textile factories and much else. As the editor points out, the correspondents were journalists, not trained investigators, and their methods do not have the rigour of sociologists, but in this they are typical of the time and social historians have to rely heavily on precisely this type of source. There is also the compensation that as journalists, the correspondents wrote very well, Reach's vivid description in particular beginning a new phase in British reporting. As well, therefore, as being of great importance as a historical source these volumes should appeal to a much wider, general readership.

The editor's contribution is confined mainly to an eighty-six page introduction to the first volume, which gives accounts of the correspondents (one is unknown), a table of wages derived from the reports, and an exhaustive bibliography. There are few notes in the text and, disappointingly, no real examination of the methods and preconceptions of the correspondents or critical analysis of the quality of their reports. But there is, in each volume, an index which immeasurably increases the usefulness of the work, although some topics are to be found as sub-sections under entries for particular towns.

It must be said that these provincial correspondents do not reach Mayhew's standards. His profound, detailed studies and systematic interviewing conveyed the authentic experience of groups of the poor and really analysed poverty and casual labour. The other correspondents were itinerant, providing descriptive and picturesque accounts that had a greater entertainment content, and using interviews often only as illustrations. Unlike Mayhew, they readily share and expound the *Morning Chronicle's* convictions on continual progress through capitalist industrialization. They also exemplify the contemporary tendency to isolate "social problems" as a self-sufficient area of study, independent of the workings of the economy, so preserving the latter from criticism. The contrast with Mayhew is all the greater in that his conclusions differed from his original views.

The theoretical self

Roland Littlewood

ROM HARRÉ
Personal Being: A theory for individual psychology
299pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £17.
0631 133186

The children's comic, the *Beezer*, has for some years run a strip called "The Numskulls" in which interactions between the unnamed central character and his surroundings are perceived and debated by a series of tiny homunculi inside his head, each at their posts—Ear Department, Eye Department, Mouth Department, and so on. Their decisions to activate a response are relayed from the operator of the Brain Department, who has a more developed moral conscience than his colleagues, through a continual and acrimonious interchange with Our Man (who of course has no separate internal representation). As Rom Harré suggests, this type of sub-personal psychology generates the rhetoric of medieval morality plays with their arguments between Fanny, Folly and Sad Cynicism, and that of Freud's structural interplay between Id, Superego and Ego (sometimes described as a fight in a coal cellar between a sex-mad gorilla and a maiden aunt, refereed by a rather nervous college student).

"Sub-personal psychologies" are theories in which component psychological systems take on some of the characteristics of the whole social individual (the man in the Eye Department wears spectacles). Like the machine analogues of more recent cognitive psychology, they merely provide a scientific model for folk-derived psychological distinctions which are grounded less in empirical evidence than in certain covert political and moral assumptions.

Personal Being is Harré's latest contribution to what the dust-jacket terms (in a supra-personal psychology?) "a vigorous attempt by sociology to take over individual psychology". Indeed it is, although something between linguistic philosophy and social theory might be more appropriate than sociology. The figure at the centre of his psychology is not one whose being is observable in the natural world but "the kind of creature who uses theories to order, and so create, the forms of experience". This organization of personal experience is always in accordance with a system of theories structured ultimately by a series of grammatical models. The enterprise of psychology is then the disentangling of such theories.

Brilliant and endlessly provoking, *Personal Being* criticizes the "cognitivist" Freud, Piaget and contemporary cognitive psychologists, from a perspective derived from Wittgenstein, Vygotsky and G. H. Mead, for whom the "self" is historically and culturally specific. Phenomenology and behaviourism remain attempts at penetrating an illusive Cartesian self grounded in an ethnocentric assumption of the subjective as hidden deep within personal consciousness. On the contrary, argues Harré, the "self" is a theory, akin to gravitation, but one whose social roots determine our self-perception as autonomous agents in a more fundamental way. If we are interested in patterns of communication at, say, a board meeting, we may notice that the stenographer remains silent; is it legitimate to treat this as a particular instance of the more general mode of hearing and response, or is not the latter a "folk" construction whose reality is maintained by a series of closed justifications?

Harré reverses the tradition of treating moral psychology as an aspect of cognitive psychology, for only once childhood was invented as a social state did it acquire its distinctive cognitive stages. The Piaget-Kohlberg model of the child's development of successive moral positions merely demonstrates the limited rights of children to perform certain cognitive operations in particular situations. Whilst Kohlberg's moral stages may be appropriate for the cad (the American egalitarian) they are not applicable to a gentleman—or peasant—of honour.

Harré is less concerned with a sociology of knowledge, or a demonstration of how specific historical situations generate certain psychologies, than with establishing the cartographical starting-point for an investigation of our own concept of mind. The various assumptions of

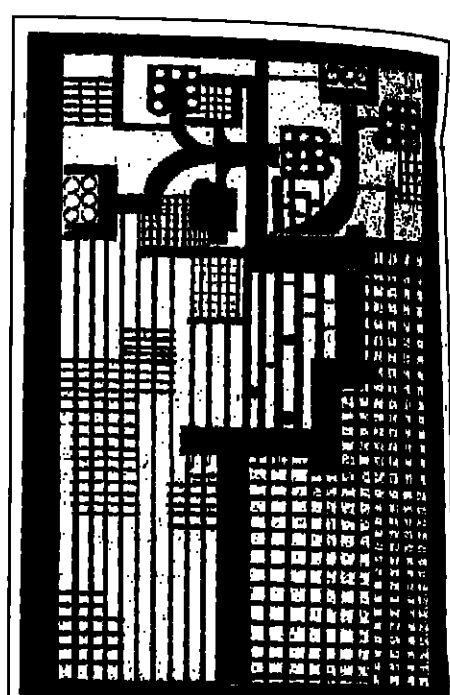
our personal being, self-consciousness, agency and personal history, can be mapped into a psychological space whose dimensions are public/private display and individual/collective realization. To examine memory we need not invent a Memory Department but rather plot the specific social usage of the term "memory" on our chart: a child's idea of its personal history is less authoritative than its mother's recollection of the same events; a mnemonic may pass from the private to the public domain; that part of our biography located in hospital records is not accessible to us as individuals.

A new dualism is introduced: between the "person" located in the public-collective area, and the "self" from which it is derived by a Vygotskian appropriation. Some form of the "person", perceiving and acting in the world as an embodied being from a place in physical space and time, is found in all human societies but the theory we know as the "self" is a local, particularly Western, contingency which may have various properties. What we represent as personal agency may be located externally, a concept apparently acceptable to the original bearers of the *Illad*, but one so disconcerting to ourselves we find it difficult to slide into the type of mock-heroic struggle with his Muse which Max Beerbohm offers us in *Zuleika Dobson*. (The current psychological treatment of "creativity", however, still seems to return us to the winged lady floating gently over the artist's head.) Not so for the Eskimo, whose "collectivism" Harré suggests is articulated by the frequent use of the other-directed indexical suffix *tok*; the Eskimo term we gloss as "indignation" is more properly rendered as "irritation at another". Harré leaves open the question of whether "self" refers to anything existing in nature, such as the hierarchical

organization of cognitive abilities. If it does, the latter does not generate the concept: following Kant he offers a transcendental unity, one not given in experience but one through which experience is ordered.

Although perhaps alarming to psychologists, Harré's broad thesis will be familiar to anthropologists, particularly those conversant with the recent work in women's anthropology or with Marcel Mauss's *La notion de personne*. His system of psychological space recalls Mary Douglas's group/grid but, unlike hers, allows for the social formation of individuality rather than regarding it as a mere absence of social determination. Harré criticizes his fellow contributors to Heelas and Lock's recent *Indigenous Psychologies* for their neglect of the linguistic dimension. His reliance on the indexical properties of language leaves open the question of how social organization actually generates certain conceptions of the individual beyond an undeveloped notion of the grounding of discourse in power. Another problem is the status of the movements in his psychological space: is the "development" of self from person to be understood as a recapitulation by the Western individual of past historical events? The schema appears to presume that there is a discrete point for every indigenous psychological concept of person or self-hood: to demonstrate its universality, we need to plot on it a variety of indigenous concepts. I suspect that attempts to do so will result in a proliferation of further dimensions to accommodate their diversity.

Personal Being provides a radical new schema by which we may align future work in the psychology of intentionality, rationality, emotion and meaning; for the comparative psychiatrist it offers a new angle on the relationship between culture and schizophrenia



Natalia Gontcharova's "Dessain pour un Radiateur" will be offered for sale at Christie's, in their sale "The Modern Movement", to include Art Nouveau and Art Deco, on Tuesday, April 17.

(phenomenologically a disorder of the self). It is difficult to see how the practice of academic psychology can be quite the same again. But then doubtless that has been said before: Harré's rooting of the whole psychological enterprise in lay theories of the mind—a psychology of everyday language—suggests that it is the anthropologists who will profit most from the establishment of a new link between the two disciplines, a link conceived substantially on their own terms.

ing after it is finished—he manages to deny it by declaring it to be almost certainly the result of "romancing".

In fact, it is probably Alland's theoretical stance as much as his methodology which manages to render the drawings in his book so opaque. He is, he tells us in the introduction, a nativist, an ardent believer in innate human dispositions, and an enthusiastic follower of Chomsky in these matters. Chomsky and his disciples believe that "all languages (including all possible future languages) are restricted by a single set of rules that control the generation of meaningful sentences. This common structure is called the universal grammar, or UG. This UG underlies and restricts all particular grammars." So, too, Alland seeks a UG governing the production of aesthetically meaningful forms which will reveal formal aesthetic universals deep beneath the surface variation of drawings from particular cultures.

This is not the place to rehearse the many arguments and substantive criticisms that have been levelled against Chomsky's idea of an innate universal grammar. Suffice it to say that the debate about UG is now pretty well over, and anybody who pins UG to their mast as Alland does without comment, that is without some attempt to acknowledge the complexities of the issues involved, is being either wilfully partisan in an unhelpful way or naïve. One suspects the latter since on Alland's own admission his data do not allow him "to judge whether or not universal aesthetic principles underlie the observed diversity, but they do not really contradict the idea either. In fact they can be interpreted to partially support it, provided the interpretation is guided by a nativist theory." But, since Alland's notion of an aesthetic universal is inseparable from his nativism, the proviso here is simply an avenue for self-confirmation rather than any independent basis for regarding the drawings presented to us. If we ignore Alland's attachment to UG and its attendant nativism, we are left with an entirely formalist account in which, for example, the propensity of children in Bali to fill the page with a repetitive pattern, is seen as merely the application of a recursive rule which generates an unlimited series of marks: is it really any wiser—either about the art of Balinese children or the human desire for repetition—after being told this?

Kelmscott and after

David McKitterick

JOHN J. WALSDORF
William Morris in Private Press and Limited Editions: A Descriptive Bibliography of Books by and about William Morris 1891-1981
602pp. Library Association. £75.
089774 0416

How much William Morris liked the collectors of the books he printed is not altogether clear. Their demands came as an uncomfortable surprise in 1891, yet he was himself no mean acquirer of manuscripts and early printed books, was in constant contact with Sydney Cockerell and Charles Fairfax Murray, two of the most resourceful collectors of their generation, and on occasion was persuaded to increase the print run of a Kelmscott Press book in order to meet popular demand. There was no oddity in

this. He was, more than most people, a man of contradictions. In the same way, the Kelmscott Press and all that it stood for, and its positive effects for good on the printing trade at large, seem—at first—to contradict one another. The experiments carried out at the best-known of all private presses—a return to proven models of the past, suitably adapted to the present, a striving for page decoration where illustration and text are made to match, stress on materials of good quality, insistence on careful and tightly spaced composition and properly proportioned *mise en page*—can be summed up as a search for the best in physical and visual structure. These aims were as applicable to short runs on a private hand-press as to ordinary commercial printing, as C. T. Jacob realized at the Chiswick Press and as Francis Meynell, Stanley Morison and Bernard Newdigate were to prove subsequently. Morris may have inspired the Doves Press and its followers in England, and an astonishing assortment of

private-press disciples in America, but his influence has been felt far beyond the private presses, as one of the foundations of modern book design not only in England and the United States, but on the Continent as well.

As a book collector, John J. Walsdorf has chosen to confine himself to what has proved to be only one aspect of Morris's influence, and has therefore forced himself to ignore (for collecting purposes and for this *Bibliography*) the much stronger line of descent in the world of commercial printing.

Walsdorf has been a collector for fifteen and more years. He sought first to amass privately printed and (most importantly) explicitly limited editions of works by Morris; then, beginning with a chance offer in a Chicago bookstore, association copies of the Kelmscott Press books themselves; and finally, a collection of booksellers' and auctioneers' catalogues that would chart the reputation of the Kelmscott books. This work is the result of that collecting: a bibliography of Kelmscott Press books with notes of copies with important provenances, a bibliography of privately printed and limited editions by and about Morris (again with notes on a few particular copies) and, at the end, a price guide based on recent booksellers' (but not auctioneers') catalogues. Walsdorf has also added, in a section taking up about a quarter of the book, a series of facsimiles of notable sales and catalogues since 1900, of which by far the most important is a complete reprint of the Cockerell sale of 1956. He thus offers at once a bibliography of his carefully restricted field of collecting, a guide to other collectors and a history of taste.

For many people Walsdorf's insistence on limitation statements as a qualification for inclusion in his collection and so in this account of it (though he allows himself to break his own rule once or twice) will present a distastefully lop-sided view. His decision to begin in 1891, the year of the foundation of the Kelmscott Press, immediately excludes *The Roots of the Mountains*, printed by the Chiswick Press in 1890 and one of Morris's most impressive experiments in typography with a sympathetic commercial printer. On the other hand, many of the more recent items to qualify for inclusion are slight indeed; and while it is useful to see details of the catalogue of an exhibition of Sanford L. Berger's collection, it seems perverse to omit those of the collection of John M. Crawford in Providence and New York for no other reason than that they bear no limitation statement.

As a bibliographer, Walsdorf confesses to some puzzlement over which model to follow in establishing his descriptions, and one can only sympathize with him. But the results are not always happy. It is odd, in a bibliography of a person who took such obsessive care over the materials that he used, to find so little about types or paper. Walsdorf describes bindings, and transcribes colophons, but decorations and illustrations are treated haphazardly; a more careful choice of illustration could have done much to remedy this. When he describes an item as both a broadside and consisting of six pages one can see what he means, but the problem should not be posed. In the notes on each of the books, that follow the formal descriptions, Walsdorf offers much of value, particularly on the less well-known presses, but there are too many gaps here too. He assumes too much in imagining that all readers will recognize the name of Bowden, introduced and unexplained as the printer of the 1891 *News from Nowhere* and the owner of a presentation copy of *The Wood beyond the World*, as that of the first man to be employed (and originally the entire staff) at the Kelmscott Press. No mention at all is made of the private ledger and cost book of the Press, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library and central to an understanding of its preceding. And while John J. Walsdorf has quite usefully recorded the appearances of association copies of Kelmscott books in auction catalogues—in America in particular—someone else will have to trawl with a finer net for catalogues that his adventurous search has failed to catch, and also in institutional libraries. A century and a half after his birth, we still need an adequate bibliography of William Morris.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 168

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than April 27. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct—in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entires, marked "Author, Author 168" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on May 4.

1 I . . . reached my preparatory school supposing that I had been delivered to my parents by a sick, a naïveté that won me the ridicule of other boys. I indeed, considering what I afterwards learnt of my father's behaviour, and of the licence and impropriety of his relationship with my mother, I think it a little dishonest of them to have excluded me so completely from that freedom of thought in which they themselves seem to have indulged.

2 I must have been a considerable embarrassment to my father. I sat in his office all day reading, while his staff, his contributors, and his proprietors came in and out. Eventually, I suppose, people found out the reason I was always there, but I am told it caused a great deal of comment, not unnaturally, at the time. I didn't worry. I loved to read, I loved to be with my father, now the only parent I could trust, and after home the busy office seemed like a rest camp.

3 Then, abruptly would come a ring at the front door: my Father would bend at me a corrugated brow, and under his breath, "What's that?" and then, at the sound of footsteps, would bolt into the verandah, and round the garden into the potting-shed. If it was no visitor more serious than the postman or the tax-gatherer, I used to go forth and coast the timid wanderer home. If it was a caller, above all a female caller, it was my privilege to prevaricate, remarking innocently that "Papa is out!"

1 "How did you get your wooden leg?"
"Mr ——— replied (tartly to this personal inquiry).
"In an accident."
"Do you like it?"
"Well I haven't got to keep it warm", Mr ——— made answer, in a sort of desperation occasioned by the singularity of the question.
Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, book 1, chapter 5.

2 "I've got a false leg, but that's different. Boys respect that. Think I lost it in the war. Actually," said the Captain, "and strictly between ourselves, mind, I was run over by a tram in Stoke-on-Trent when I was one-over-the-eight. Still, it doesn't do to let that out to everyone."
Evelyn Waugh, *Decline and Fall*, chapter 3.

3 "A sailor! sailor, ha? you've lost your leg." I know it, Sir — which forces me to beg. I've nine poor children, Sir, besides a wife. — God bless them the sole comforts of my life."
Peter Plinder, *The Royal Tour*.

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Robert Adams is the author of *Beauty in Photography: Essays in defence of traditional values*, 1981. Sally Alexander is a lecturer in History at the North-East London Polytechnic. Robin Alston is Consultant in Bibliography to the British Library and Editor of the *Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue*. Chris Baldick is the author of *The Social Missions of English Criticism 1848-1932*, which appeared last year. Anita Brookner's books include *Jacques-Louis David*, 1980. John Butt is a lecturer in Spanish at King's College London. Angus Calder is staff tutor in Arts with the Open University in Scotland. Patrick Carnegy is the author of *Faust as Musician: A study of Thomas Mann's novel "Doctor Faustus"*, 1973. Sydney Cheekland's joint volume with Olive Cheekland, *Industry and Ethos, Scotland 1832-1914*, has recently appeared. David Coward's *The Dreyfus Affair* appeared last year in the Leeds Videotext series. P. L. Dickenson is *Rouge Dragon Pursuivant* of Arms. Denis Donoghue is Henry James Professor of English and American Letters at New York University. John Fitch is the author of *Before the Revolution*, 1978. Roy Foster's *Lord Randolph Churchill: A political life* was published in 1981. Henry Gifford's publications include *Tolstoy*, 1982, in the Oxford Past Masters Series. Victoria Glendinning's biography of Vita Sackville-West was published last year. Christopher Hill's most recent book is *Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution*, 1980. Sidney Hook is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of New York. Peter Lake is the author of *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church*, 1982. Roland Littlewood is a psychiatrist and social anthropologist working at Guy's Hospital, London. Steven Luker's books include *Individualism*, 1973. Arnold McMillin is Professor of Russian at the University of Liverpool. Mary Midgley is the author of *Heart and Mind*, 1981. Edwin Morgan's collections of poems include *Star Gate*, 1979. John North is Professor of the History of Science at the University of Groningen. Tod Papageorge is Professor of Photography at Yale University. Valerie Pearl is the President of New Hall, Cambridge. Tom Phillips's version of Dante's *Inferno* was published last year in a limited edition. Iorwerth Prothero is a senior lecturer in History at the University of Manchester. Brian Rotman is the author of *Jean Piaget: Psychologist of the real*, 1977. Andrew Sanders's *Charles Dickens: Resurrectionist* was published in 1982. Jonathan Sumption's books include *The Abingdon Crusade*, 1978. Anthony Thwaite's *Poems 1953-1983* have recently been published. J. A. Turner is a lecturer in History at Royal Holloway College, Egham. Anthony Whitaker is *Legal Manager* of *Times Newspapers Ltd*.

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